

OCEAN OF KNOWLEDGE

By

SRI SRI RAVISHANKAR

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1. Chakras & the Seven Sacred Cities

Seven cities in India correspond to seven centres or chakras in our body: "Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya, Kashi, Kanchi, Avanthika, Puri drawaravati chaiva, saptaide moksha dayika". Maya or Haridwar corresponds to the mooladhar chakra situated at the base of the spine. When the jadata or lethargy goes and enthusiasm begins, you commence your journey. Haridwar, the starting point, is "the door to the house of the Divine".

Kanchi corresponds to the swadhisthana chakra situated behind the genitals, as the presiding deity here is Kamakshi, the goddess of kama or desire.

Ayodhya corresponds to the third chakra, the manipura, situated in the navel region, where joy, generosity, greed and jealousy manifest. All these emotions are connected to Ayodhya.

It was the jealousy and greed of Kaikai that made Rama take vanavas. Ayodhya is also known for the generosity of Rama. The joy of Rama's return to Ayodhya is celebrated as Diwali. Joy, generosity, greed and jealousy meet in the nabhi pradesh, Ayodhya. Ayodhya also means where there is no fight, where it cannot hurt.

Mathura is anahata, the heart chakra. The heart is associated with three emotions: Love, fear and hatred. Mathura symbolises the love and devotion of the gopis for Krishna, as well as of the fear and hatred of Kansa, all matters of the heart.

Avanthika, also called Ujjain, is related to the vishuddha or the throat chakra. Ujjain is the city of art and literature. Poet Kalidas hailed from Ujjain. It is also the city of Vikramaditya, of grief and glory. We feel gratitude in the throat region — we get choked.

Kashi represents the ajna chakra situated between the eyebrows. Kashi has always been the seat of knowledge. That's why the ajna chakra is also called gyana chakshu, the third eye. Kashi is the city of pundits and scholars.

Dwaraka represents the sahasrara, the crown chakra on top of the head. Dwarka literally means: "Where is the door?" The door is irrelevant if there are no walls. Infinity has no walls. Krishna left his body in Dwarka. Sahasrara also means thousand avenues. It means the pathless path. The path to liberation begins at Haridwar and culminates at Dwarka.

The soul is called Purusha. Pura means a town. Purusha means one who lives in the town. The Purusha is unbound and infinite. But the Purusha experiences bondage with all the negative emotions. Positive feelings with knowledge are liberating. Positive feelings without knowledge create negative emotions, which are stifling, hence, one experiences bondage. When you observe the prana moving through different centres associated with sensations, the negative feelings cease to exist and one is liberated from bondage.

The microcosm and the macrocosm are interlinked. Planet earth, home to many organisms,

is itself a large organism. It is not just a place for living beings; it is a living organism as a whole. This is what the Gaia theory says. Materialism considers everything as objects. Spirituality, on the other hand, discovers life in everything. So do children. For them, the moon talks, the sun smiles and the mountains hear. Everything comes alive. Chicken, cows, mice - all are perceived to be in communication mode. Even cities have collective consciousness. A Street where unethical people conduct their business is believed to emit heavy vibrations whereas an educational institution or a place of worship emits positive and light vibrations.

The seven sacred rivers are the Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Godavari, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri.

Together with the seven sacred cities, they are linked to the seven sacred spots within you.

2. You are a Masterpiece

"A plum once said, 'Just because a banana lover came by, I converted myself into a banana. Unfortunately, his taste changed after a few months and so I became an orange. When he said I was bitter I became an apple, but he went in search of grapes. Yielding to the opinions of so many people, I have changed so many times that I no more know who I am. How I wish I had remained a plum and waited for a plum lover'.

Just because a group of people does not accept you as you are, there is no necessity for you to strip yourself of your originality. You need to think good of yourself, for the world takes you at your own estimate.

Never stoop down in order to gain recognition. Never let go of your true self to win a relationship. In the long run, you will regret that you traded your greatest Glory – your uniqueness, for momentary validation. Even Gandhiji was not accepted by many people.

The group that does not accept you as YOU is not your world.

There is a world for each one of you, where you shall reign as king /queen by just being yourself. Find that world. In fact, that world will find you.

What water can do, gasoline cannot and what copper can, gold cannot. The fragility of the ant enables it to move and the rigidity of the tree enables it to stay rooted.

Everything and everybody has been designed with a Proportion of uniqueness to serve a purpose that we can fulfill only by being our unique self. You as you alone can serve your purpose and I as I Alone can serve my purpose. You are here to be you. JUST YOU.

There was a time in this world when a Krishna was required and he was sent; a time when

a Christ was required and he was sent; a time when a Mahatma was required and he was sent; a time when a J.R.D. Tata was required and he was sent.

There came a time when you were required on this planet and hence you were sent. Let us be the best we can be. In the history of the universe, there has been nobody like you and to the infinity of time to come, there will be no one like you.

Existence should have loved you so much that it broke the mould after making you, so that another of your kind will never get repeated.

You are original. You are rare. You are unique. You are a wonder. You are a masterpiece. Celebrate your Uniqueness.

3. "You are with the Master to share the joy of the Master, to share the consciousness of the Master. For that, you have to empty your cup of what is already in it. So you share that with the Master. You share whatever you have and don't judge, "Oh, that is garbage". The Master is ready to accept any garbage of any extent. However you are, he will embrace you. He is ready to share. You only have to share from your side".

4. "Gratefulness is inevitable. When you go beyond gratefulness, then union happens. No "I," no "you" remains. You are part of the Master. You are just One Being with a thousand heads and a thousand arms, but with one heart. You have got to be grateful on the path, but you have to transcend gratefulness".

5. To develop patience do we just observe the impatience?

Sri Sri: Just observe the thoughts and feelings and don't regret about it. Observe your thoughts. Silence makes you observe. As you observe, your thoughts will reduce. The thoughts were always there, but only in silence can you observe them!

6. Attachment happens when we do not do seva; when we lose our commitment to service. When we do seva then attachments simply disappear. Keep the desire and commitment to do seva.

7. Siddhah svatantrabhavah:

Essence: Our sense organs are spectators. All the happenings in the world is witnessed by our senses. A sage is free from the sway of feelings.

8. Gurudev, I have been a follower of the Radhaswami tradition for a very long time. In my desire to meet you, I attended the Happiness program and learnt the Sudarshan Kriya. Now I feel guilty that I am not doing something wrong. Can I follow two different spiritual traditions together?

Sri Sri: There is no need to feel guilty at all. See, you started following a particular spiritual tradition sincerely and did a lot of good service there, as a result of that you got the gift of coming to this tradition. But once you are practicing the meditation practices of this tradition (of The Art of Living), I would suggest you to not mix up them up with what you were doing earlier.

Do not try to change or mix the techniques taught here with some other ones you have learnt before. Follow the techniques and the approaches taught here as you have learnt it. You are also receiving the knowledge from that spiritual tradition, so continue to do so and honour it.

All knowledge is one – the knowledge of the Self. It is just expressed in different ways by different people and spiritual traditions.

If you really look at it, there is no conflict between any spiritual traditions. It is just a trap of the mind, so you need not worry about this and take it too much to heart. Honour everyone and every tradition, but follow one spiritual tradition with all sincerity.

9. "When you say to your loved ones, "If you need me, I am here. I am here for you. I am here to make you comfortable", those are the moments that you have really lived your life".
10. Whenever something worries you, awaken yourself. Remind yourself that one day we all have to die. No matter how much you decorate and adorn this body, one day it will burn on the funeral pyre.
11. Gurudev, in one of the meditations you say, 'The nose is hollow and empty, the throat is hollow and empty'. When everything already is hollow and empty, then what is the use of taking our attention there during meditation? Should we not meditate upon God instead?

Sri Sri: To get there, at least make yourself hollow and empty first. First you must become hollow and empty like a flute. Then you will see that the harmony of the Divine will flow through you.

This is why in the great tradition of our Masters, it is said, 'Neti Neti' (not this, not this). It means, 'It (Divinity) is not this, and it is not that also'. So in this way, they went on negating and rejecting every limited understanding of God, until they finally realized that everything

is One Consciousness, and there is nothing beyond it.

God is not a person or some limited form; He is the Supreme power behind everything in this creation. God is the melodious harmony playing through this entire Creation, but to be able to recognize and listen to His music, you first need to become hollow and empty (meaning to drop one's limited concepts, small desires and understanding).

This is why it is necessary to experience and become aware of that emptiness first. Only then will you be able to experience the totality of the Divine.

12. Please comment on this. I see so many people who are very close to you. I feel that I am not special. How do I feel the personal connection with you? I feel it is necessary to have personal connection in order to be 100% on the path.

Sri Sri: Certain things you should assume, and this is one of the things that you should assume – we have a personal connection; that is it, full stop. Now, don't question it another time. No point in questioning your connection. We are all connected. There is no choice. Neither do I have a choice, nor do you have a choice. So relax, put to rest this particular question if it bothers you.

Don't think some are close to me and some are not; someone is special and someone is not special. No, you are as special and everyone is unique. Engage yourself in any of the project. The more you engage in some or the other project, the more we will have to interact. Otherwise what is there to interact? 'Hello! How are you? Are you doing fine? And you will say, 'Yes', and I will say, 'Yes', and that is it, we part. But if you have something to do, like Sushant has done something on Twitter, so I said to Sushant, 'Let us see, come and let us discuss. I want to learn what Twitter is'. Sushant got an award, do you know about that? He was in Obama's campaign and he did something with Twitter and was awarded for that, just two days back. So when everyone was scratching their head, he came up with an innovative idea. He thought out of the box and the company honored him.

The company Twitter honored him for thinking out-of-the-box. So take a project like that. Take a project on whatever you like. Now Meenakshi came up with a wonderful cookbook. Meenakshi and her team have come up with a cookbook. It is not a book actually but pages that cooks can keep in front of them and start cooking. So it is a project and like that if everyone comes up with a project then there is something to sit and talk about. Otherwise in silence, in meditation, we are already connected, we are linked and anytime you need any help anywhere, when you ask, do you get it or not? How many of you get it? (Everyone raises their hands). See, everyone gets it. So I am doing my job!

13. "The Guru is a tatva - an omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent principle. Establishing connection with this tatva is the source of greatest strength"

14. Many times, someone says something unpleasant to me, but at that time I do not know what to reply back. Later on, I keep on thinking about it again and again for a long time. I think, maybe I should have said this.

Sri Sri: That is where the knowledge helps. I know it goes on eating your head for a long time. That is when you should say, 'everything is nothing. All this will disappear. All these people are nothing, and they are all going to disappear one day'.

See, the brain keeps giving some opinion here and there, and this tongue, which has no bone, goes on blabbering. What is the big thing? Those sounds, which came from their mouth and reached our ears need not rattle our mind. See it scientifically.

That's why both gyana (knowledge) and vigyana (science) are important. From both angles if you see, nothing really matters. Knowing this brings you that inner strength to move on with a smile.

15. Gurudev, Dear Gurudev, is it alright if I meditate thinking about you, about how beautiful you appear, how wonderful are your eyes, and that your smile is so lovely? Is it alright to meditate upon your form?

Sri Sri: See, if you are able to meditate effortlessly by remembering someone or something, then that is alright.

Maharishi Patanjali has mentioned in the Yoga Sutras (a treatise on the eight limbs of Yoga) that if you are able to meditate by remembering or contemplating upon an image of someone, or something that is very dear to you, then that is alright.

There are many approaches to meditation.

Here (in the Advanced Meditation Course), by saying that everything around you is hollow and empty, we bring the mind that is turned outwards (to the material world) back inwards to its source. When you become aware that everything around you is hollow and empty, then a deep realization dawns within you.

So meditation is that which happens very effortlessly. But if, while you sit for meditation, you make efforts to remember Gurudev's image and how he looks, then meditation will not happen.

There is a tradition in which people are taught to meditate by contemplating upon some form.

In the Yoga Sutras it is said, 'Vitraag vishayam-va chittam'. It means that just by thinking about an enlightened and dispassionate soul, one can go deep into meditation. That is why

one goes into meditation just by thinking about the Guru. This really does happen, and it is alright. But you need not strain yourself so much to think of the Guru in order to meditate. Once you are connected with the Master, when your heart becomes one with the Master, and when love dawns from within you, and then meditation happens effortlessly.

It is how it was with the Gopis (the womenfolk of Vrindavan where Lord Krishna spent his early years), who were so totally in love with Lord Krishna. The Gopis never made any effort to meditate. They were so soaked in their love for Lord Krishna that they would effortlessly slip into meditation. The moment there is deep love, meditation just happens. The other approach is that which was taught by Lord Buddha. For meditation, Lord Buddha would say that 'everything around you is temporary and short-lived. Nothing will last forever. Just remember that it will all disappear one day'.

So this is another way to meditate.

16. Guruji, after all these years, I am still struggling, why? Love you Guruji!

Sri Sri: You love me and then you are struggling. Struggling for what? You are struggling for money, then don't sit and day dream, do hard work. If one business does not work, choose another business and do it.

You can only struggle with two things, a job or relationship. If you are not getting married, you have been too choosy and so things are not working and if you are already in a relationship and then you are struggling, then of course the knowledge point comes here, accept people as they are. So you try to accept them more and more, but your mind says no. Know that it is because of the knowledge that you are able to sustain and survive. Do you see what I am saying? Somehow you are making things work. So don't think nothing works for you. I don't think that is a fact.

The third issue could be health. There is no fourth issue and being in The Art of Living always helps you to somehow manage all the three. Don't sit and day dream and only think about miracles to happen. Miracles do happen, but if you crave for miracles then they will take a back seat. Nature wants you to be dynamic.

There are people who have asked me, 'Guruji, please give me some numbers for my lottery ticket. I just want to win a lottery so that I don't have to do anything. Just do sadhana all the time and some seva'. No ways! First of all, decide what it is that you want from life. Struggling with what? With money?! You know money is something that you will always find people short of money. Always!

You can see for example, the richest country, the only super power on this planet is USA and it is under heavy debt; trillions of dollars of debt. You take big companies; many of them are in debt. The richer a person gets, the more expenses he has to do. At the same

time, there are poor people who are contributing towards charity, poor people who take time to do service, which is amazing. They feel so much abundance.

The other day in India, a gentleman comes to me. He has a small shop; a small little kiosk for himself, and he had inherited two plots of land. So he comes to me and offers me one plot of land.

He says, 'I want to give this plot to you', he insisted. He came with his whole family, his wife, and his mother and said, 'I have two, I want to donate one and keep the other one'. The plot is in a very expensive location of the city and he could make a big fortune from it, but I look at the heart in that guy. I said, 'Okay, I will take it, but it will be in your name only. You should keep it for me and you build your shop here. Sell the other plot and with the money that you get, do business'. I could not say I won't take this to him because he will feel hurt, so I said, 'Yes this is mine, but it will be in your name and you should have it. Look at the broad mind of that person.

Another day, a very poor lady comes, and she had just one gold chain that she inherited. I was going in the car and she comes running and gives me an envelope in my hand. Usually people give me envelopes with letters in it of some problems. So I took the envelope, and in it I found a gold chain. Then I told some people to go and find this lady and give the chain back to her saying, Guruji sent you blessings.

Do you know, during our silver jubilee, there is a beautiful story that happened! I came down from the steps on the last day and a small boy comes running to me with tears in his eyes and he gives me an envelope. I take the envelope and it had Rs. 5000 in it. I looked at that boy and I said, 'what do you do? He said he is a laborer. The money in the envelope that he had given me had two months of his earnings, and he said, 'Please take this'. He said, 'I can't tell you how much my life has transformed. Please accept this'. I took just Rs.100 from that and returned back Rs. 4900. I told him, you know this Rs.100 is so precious for me, this is enough. I will take these 2 months of his salary; someone who is a laborer who does manual work, he comes and offers.

Such a big heart is there in people. What I am saying is you too should feel abundance. You don't have to be very rich to feel the abundance. In fact many rich people don't feel abundance at all, they feel lack. They are not generous. But poor people are very generous; they have that feeling, that art. Don't imagine a situation where you will become super rich one day and then you will start doing some seva, no, nothing like that. You can feel abundance at any point of time and the moment you start feeling abundance, you will see things will get better, got it!

Similarly, don't be feverish about a relationship, just relax and you will find your relationship with people will improve and become better. If you are like a leech, clinging on to somebody in a relationship and bugging them, even though you say all nice words, that person will run away from you because they can't handle it. One aspect is to give love, and

another is to know how to handle love, receive love as well. It needs only a centered, enlightened person. Now don't expect that type of behavior from everybody. You have to be very much at ease with yourself. If you are at ease with yourself, everyone will be at ease with you.

"The door to heaven is a broad mind that digests everything from the past. Being like an elephant. Do you know elephants eat the leaves, the bark, the fruit; they eat absolutely anything from coconut leaves to bamboo to bananas. Similarly, in life, there are many pleasant things and unpleasant things, good people, bad people. Whatever has happened, digest it all. Digesting the past brings happiness and relief in the present".

17. How do I know if I am doing the right thing or not? Sometimes I get very confused.

Sri Sri: When you are not doing the right thing, something pinches you, something irritates you; something inside tells you that you are not doing the right thing. This is how you know you are not doing the right thing.

When you are doing the right thing, sometimes doubts also come. So, if doubts come then you can think that it is the right thing. But if irritation comes then it is wrong. Our doubt is always about something that is right. Also, when your prana is low then doubt comes. Raise your prana with more meditation. Then you will see that these doubts don't rise up in the mind.

Three types of silence

1. Mouth shut.
2. Not taking pleasure of senses. touch, taste, smell etc.
3. Contentment from inside.

The secret is contentment. It will bring all the things that you wanted best for you.

18. Three Kinds of Silence.

First is the silence of no talking. This is very beneficial for people just to be aware of what they are saying and how much energy they spend talking. Second is the silence of stillness. This is the silence inside of us that is detached from the noise in the world. This inner stillness is very important if we want to understand and grow as a spiritual person. Inner silence frees us from the noise of the world and thirdly, there is the silence of oneness, oneness with the entire universe. This is the course silence takes inside of us. Oneness is the goal of silent practice.

19. Three Levels of Silence

One is not saying anything. This is what we usually call silence. People understand silence as not talking, not gesturing, and not doing anything.

There is another level of silence, which is one step further. It is when our mind is not interested in the things around it, but is just focused inward. You are not interested in seeing, talking or listening to anything.

What happens when you see? You're taking something in. When you're listening, you're taking something in. When you're tasting, and touching, you are taking something in. All our five senses are trained to take something in. This is all an activity. Silence is disinterestedness in activity.

This does not mean that you shouldn't eat food. Eat food, but do not feel like, this food is tasty, this food is not tasty. Eat food but your mind must not be involved. The mind not getting involved in any of the five senses brings a certain amount of quietness inside you and this is the second type of silence. It is an inward journey of the mind.

The third degree of silence is, total oneness, total satisfaction. There is no need of anything, total contentment. It is when all your energies, the thoughts, the mind, which is scattered all over the place comes back to its source.

In some deep meditation you might have had the glimpse of that total stillness of the mind and this stillness can be there even when you are active.

Now you might think, 'Why bother about meditation when sleep is good enough?' That is because when you are sleeping, even though your mind is not engaged in activity, there is another type of physical activity, which is even more during sleep. When you're sleeping your body is rejuvenating, it is growing, cells are multiplying; there is a lot of physical activity in the body. In fact, this sort of physical activity is much more in sleep than in the waking state.

In meditation, the reverse happens; the physical activity is low in the body. In sleep, the metabolism is high, but in meditation the metabolism comes down. So, the body also calms down and the mind also calms down during meditation. Then what happens? The intelligence awakens. This is the result of meditation. That is why you become brighter and sharper (with the practice of meditation) because it rejuvenates the body and mind at the same time and so you feel energetic.

To know 'Who You Really Are' you need a lot of energy. Energy is what is essential.

To run an atomic reactor you need energy in order to create more energy, isn't it? In the same way, to tap the source of energy, you need energy. In Sanskrit there is a saying from

the Upanishad, 'Nayam Atma Balaheenena Labhya'. A weak person cannot attain the Self.

Don't think this means that you have to be strong physically, no! They are referring to weak in the energy sense and how do you become weak? When you all the time engage in the five senses.

If you sleep a lot, don't you feel tired and weak? If you eat a lot, don't you feel tired? You do feel tired, isn't it!

If you sit and watch soccer the whole day, how do you feel at the end of the day? Totally drained! People watch movies day after day. Everyday there is some TV serial, something thrilling, something exciting, and after watching and watching, you look so tired!

People who go for movies, you should click a picture of them when they get into a theatre and again when they come out of the theatre. You will see how tired and worn out they get.

If you go to conferences where people talk from morning to evening, and sometimes even at the dinner table, they get so worn out. Someone is giving a speech and hardly anyone is listening to them, only the one who gives the speech is satisfied that he gave a talk. That is all that happens. He waits for an opportunity to throw out whatever he has been thinking in his mind, but there are very few takers. People listen and they feel so exhausted and tired. This happens in many of the conferences. If they don't leave that little space for a break, or music, if they don't give people some time to sit and relax, they get worn out.

When you see many professors or intellectuals, do you see them smiling and having a vibrant energy? Rarely will you find it. They are all so tired and worn out. Listening too much also wears you out.

Usually people who give lectures, it takes 10-15 minutes for them to warm up, and then they start delivering. They talk for not less than an hour and a half. I only talk for 10-15 minutes, sometimes half an hour. That's the maximum. No more. People cannot take it.

So, listening too much drain you, seeing too much drains you, eating drain you.

Just hang around with somebody, hold their hand that also will definitely drain you. That's the reason why people get together and they move apart because they have not taken that much needed space for them self, or given that space to others. We must respect our own space and another's space.

Once you're centered (established in the self), once you've caught the essence, then it doesn't matter. But even then there should be caution: not to do too much of anything. But till the time your system becomes strong enough to hold this enormous energy, these steps or these rules are very essential.

Silence is bringing you back home and it gives you that much needed energy to realize 'Who You Are', to realize that there is bliss, there is beauty, there is joy, and that is 'You'.

If you're upset, angry, depressed, hateful, or jealous; any of these negative emotions, it simply means that you are lacking energy (prana), and you have moved away from the center.

This is a very simple equation: If you're upset then you lack prana, that's it. When energy is there, then there is no question of getting depressed or upset. There is no question of saying, 'Oh, everything is bad. The world is hopeless'.

When there is energy, it gives you enthusiasm, and then you say, 'If the world is hopeless it gives me an opportunity to do something about it. Improve the world', because that energy uplifts your spirit and uplifts everybody's spirit as well.

It is like making a home of sand. You make a home of sand 10 times and it collapses, but then the next minute you're ready to make it again. You remain unmindful of whatever has happened before, that indicates prana.

20. Rapid Round of Questions:

"Bangalore Ashram"

Sri Sri: "Heaven on Earth... that's what everyone says!"

"Toys"

Sri Sri: "From being a toy of your emotions, become a Toy of the Divine".

"Volunteers"

Sri Sri: "A Joy in themselves".

"Blessings"

Sri Sri: "You will get them in abundance in The Art of Living".

"Prayer"

Sri Sri: "Will be answered if asked sincerely".

21. "When people criticise you and still you smile, all the fear will be gone. Your personality will blossom"

22. Being Bliss:

1. Perfect maturity is when a person hurts you and you try to understand their situation and don't hurt them back.
2. When we respond to people in the same manner as they have behaved with us, we are copying them. When we keep copying each other, it is a continuous exchange of the same quality of energy.
3. Every time we copy negative behaviors of people, we are losing our own identity; we become an imitation of all the people we meet, and stop using our original sanskara's (Karma-past life good and bad actions) of love, respect and harmony.
4. Irrespective of the others behavior, be your original self and radiate your qualities of love and humility. They will respond in the same copy. We will be happy while creating and radiating the energy and also when we receive it from them.

23. Beyond The Rational Mind: Breaking The Barrier

We usually do only that which is purposeful, useful, and rational. Everything you see, you see through the rational mind. But an intuition, a discovery, new knowledge goes beyond the rational mind. Truth is beyond the rational mind.

The rational mind is like a railroad track that is fixed in grooves. A plane has no tracks. It can fly anywhere. A balloon can float anywhere.

Some people step out of the rational mind in order to rebel against society. They want to break social law but for the ego's sake. They do it out of anger, hatred, rebelliousness, and wanting attention. This is not stepping out of the rational mind (though they think it is).

We step out of the rational mind when we do something that has no purpose. Accepting that, as an act, makes it a game. Life becomes lighter. If you are stuck with only rational acts, life becomes a burden. Suppose you play a game without a thought to winning or losing, just act irrationally. Making an act without any purpose attached to it - it is freedom - like a dance.

So just step out of the rational mind and you will find a greater freedom, an unfathomable depth, and you will come face to face with reality. Reality transcends logic and the rational mind. Until you transcend the rational mind you will not get access to creativity and the infinite.

But if you do an irrational act in order to find freedom, then it already has a purpose and a meaning. It is no longer irrational. This knowledge sheet has already spoiled its own

possibility. Break the barrier of the rational mind and then find freedom for yourself.

24. Gurudev in the Yoga Sutras, it is said that by Aparigraha (the concept of non-possessiveness or non-greediness) one gets to know their past lives. Is that true?

Sri Sri: Yes. When you do not receive anything from anyone, not even their abuses, then you are most centered.

See, material things are different. When people give you things, it is easy for you to not take it; to deny them. But when people abuse you, then you don't deny them. In fact, when someone insults you, before they can even complete what they are saying, you take the insult from them. Someone has not fully abused you yet, they have just begun saying it and you have already taken it from them.

That is why Aparigraha is important, which means, neither take anyone's insults nor take their compliments, because a compliment can get into your head and make you arrogant, and an insult can sink into your heart and can cause you intense pain.

So Aparigraha is neither taking anything positive or negative that people give. If they give, you just smile at them and not harbor them in your mind. So, when you don't worry about other's opinions of you, that is Aparigraha. You don't take anything and of course, not sitting and seeing, who is giving what and how much they are giving (in terms of material things) is also Aparigraha.

25. Gurudev, it is said that whatever had to be said has already been said, but the point is, have people heard it? Is this why so many enlightened masters have to come again and again? How to make sure this time people listen.

Sri Sri: A farmer knows the answer to this question very well. See, what does a farmer do? He takes the seeds, ploughs the field and then throws the seeds. Some seeds sprout and some don't. He does not worry and think, 'Oh, this seed has not sprouted, that has sprouted'.

He just puts the seed and whichever sprouts, sprouts, and whichever doesn't, it doesn't! Usually most of the seeds sprout if it has been ploughed properly and if the farmer has sown the seed at the right time, it does grow.

That is what we should all do. Don't worry about how many will reach the goal and how many will not. You do your job.

A musician simply sings, he doesn't see how many people are listening. If someone is playing the flute or the sitar, there is no guarantee that everybody sitting in the audience

are keenly listening to the music. Some may even doze off while the music is playing. That is their prerogative.

26. When you meet with people, you often communicate from head-to-head. You keep talking, blabbering and you keep communication on the level of the head only. When you are with nature, you start singing; you communicate with nature from your heart and when you are with the Guru, you go blank and forget all your questions. Then communication comes through the soul in silence.

27. What is the best way to control the mind?

Sri Sri: Why do you want to control the mind? You want the mind to stay in one place, right. That is what you mean by control. Why is it going here and there? If there is a nice program on television, do you need to control your mind to watch it? You love a child, you love your spouse, do you have to try to focus your mind on them? No!

Whatever you love, your mind is already focused on that. When do you need to focus? When you do not like something. Even there, if you do not like something, you don't need to focus, as the mind already does not like it.

Focus is needed when your mind is looking for something else other than what is right now. In such situations, breathing, Sudarshan Kriya, and yoga will help.

28. How do we know what our capabilities are and how can we enhance them?

Sri Sri: See, sometimes we become aware of our own capabilities, and sometimes we come to know about them when someone else speaks about them, or when we hear about it from some third person.

For quite some time, Lord Hanuman was not aware of his strengths too. Someone had to tell him that he was endowed with so much strength and so many abilities.

Sometimes we also get to know about our capabilities from others.

Now, what should you do to know more about them? When you think, 'I am able to do only this much', then just take one step further and see for yourself how you fare. Do not stop by thinking, 'I am not able to do this'. Just think, 'Let me see how much more can I do', and take one more step ahead.

Yoga is what helps enhance and sharpen one's capabilities. Yoga is not limited to doing Yogasanas and Pranayamas. Yoga means to unite totally with what you are doing; to

become one with the Divine.

All these (yoga) practices enhance our capacity and capabilities. How many of you here felt that ever since you came on the path of Sadhana, your qualities and capabilities have increased much more? (Many in the audience raise their hands) Do you see a difference between what you used to do earlier and what you are doing now? When you came to the path of knowledge, your capability increased, isn't it? That is what it is.

29. Approaches to Life

A wise person is said to have four techniques, both inwardly and outwardly — Sama, Dama, Bheda and Danda.

To deal with people and be wise, the first thing you use is Sama, which means in a peaceful and understanding way. When that doesn't work out, then you try Dama, which means allowing it to happen and forgiving.

When people don't recognise your generosity in allowing them space, then the third principle called Bheda comes in, it means to intentionally create a gap or misunderstanding. If a person still doesn't realise that they have made a mistake then it is time to use the stick, Danda, the final approach.

The same four methods apply to your inner life, your Being. Sama — maintains the equanimity. Take both the good and the bad with equanimity. Dama means giving up that which disturbs you, that which cannot put you in the royal seat of equanimity.

It means to surrender the mind, which is the cause of your sorrows, problems and misery. Dama includes forgiving too. When your mind wanders around, allow it to go. Follow it and bring it back.

Now comes Bheda - differentiate, separate the imperishable from the perishable. This very body is so hollow and empty.

When you are watching the body, pleasant sensations arise, unpleasant sensations arise. As you watch, they all disappear. Energy is oozing out of every pore of your body. If you watch, it flows in an even manner. It creates balance and you realise you are not this body or these sensations. You have been always reacting to the sensations. An emotion used to give rise to some sensation; the sensation, in turn, used to create an impression, another emotion.

So these circles of craving and aversion with sensation and emotion, made your life, both subtle body and gross body, and that took you from life to life.

Another thing that you can do is to disassociate yourself from the sensation. Then comes Danda — Danda means support. Determination and commitment are the Danda. Your spiritual discipline is Danda.

Mind is like a vine (creeper), it needs a support. Listening to spiritual discourses, satsangs, practice, Guru's presence are all the support, the Danda.

It is Chetna and Chitta that is coming out of every pore of the body. The wick is the body and you are the glow. When you shift from the wick to the glow, your mind becomes stable.

30. Guruji, when we do Sandhya Vandan in the Evening, the Sun is in the West. Then why do we do Jaap (Chanting) facing North?

Sri Sri: After Sunset the greatest power is of the magnetic poles, the North and South Pole. For as long as the sun is there, the power is in the direction of the sun, but after sun set the energy of the North and South Pole is dominant. That is why when doing Sandhya Vandan in the morning, homage is paid to the sun in the East, but in the evening by the time we finish with our offerings to the sun, the sunsets and so chanting is done facing North. The ancient people thought about everything in a very scientific manner.

Do not attach too much importance to this.

What if you are in a place like Norway where the sun does not set for two months then which direction should you face?

'Daivam sarvato mukha', God is everywhere, so you can sit anywhere, in any direction for your prayers and meditation.

These scientific explanations are good primarily for tropical countries. If the sages had taken into account the arctic regions, they might have recommended that prayers and meditation to be done facing South.

Similarly, Vastu Shastra which is suitable for India may not be appropriate for Russia.

We need to make some corrections in these recommendations based on the region of the earth where it is being applied.

In India it is recommended that the main entrance to the house should not face South, because in those days the city was planned in such a way that cremation grounds were to the south of the city and breeze blowing from that direction would enter the house through the doors and windows facing South. So Vastu was formulated accordingly.

But if you go to Russia and the Scandinavian countries, there the sun is more intense in the

South, and pleasant breeze blows from the South, so it is okay to have the main entrance facing South. If you keep the door, which is facing South open, you will get plenty of sun all year round.

Therefore, applying Vastu Shastra blindly without making corrections is not right. Many people do not know this. They don't go into the depths of this knowledge. They are 'lakeer ke fakeer' - they follow without questioning what is written.

31. "Trust is like breath. Just like you can't live without breath, you also cannot live without trust.

There are three types of trust:

Self – confidence

Faith in society

Faith in God

If any one trust is absent, then life is incomplete”.

32. "Space and silence are synonymous. Joy, fulfillment brings the silence. Desire brings noise. Silence is the cure, because in silence you come back to the source, and that creates joy".

33. Why it is that only some people get success in life even though everyone is working hard?

Sri Sri: No, don't think that way. Like I said, two options, either you win or you make others win. Don't lose your heart. Every one of us on this planet is unique, so don't compare yourself with others.

You don't know how much capability you have. When it will come to the surface, nobody knows.

Do you know of Swami Prabhupada, the founder of the Hare Krishna movement?

He was an ordinary worker in some office. He retired at 60 and went into spirituality. He met a Guru and the Guru said, 'Yes, you should go and spread Krishna's message in the world'.

At the age of 75, he travelled in a boat, went to New York and stayed in somebody's basement and started a movement. Till he was 75, nobody knew who Prabhupada was. At that age, he made the Bhagvatam popular to thousands of people.

So nobody knows when what will come out of you. So don't underestimate yourself. You

are very unique. You come to satsang, and do meditation, that itself says a lot. It will bring such positive vibrations to you, and to the world.

34. Gurudev, how do we protect our mind?

Sri Sri: That is a big job. In the Geeta it is said, even the most brilliant people are confused about what to do and what not to, and how to handle the mind. Protecting the mind is a very great task but to do it we need knowledge. Up to this moment, see all that has happened so far. It all gone! Finished. Wake up.

When you are full of energy, prana, you suddenly see it all gone. Now! All that happened is ok. Think about what to do now. Sometimes 100 percent of what you do will be successful, sometimes not. A farmer knows that not every seed that he sows will sprout. He takes the seeds and throws them in the field, and does not worry that this seed will sprout, this won't. From now onwards, it's a new chapter.

Every day is a new chapter. Bring up this awareness again and again. The whole world is filled with my atma (soul) it all Me. It's one Consciousness. This one consciousness works through one person in one way, through another person in another way. It is one ocean with many waves. If this vision comes to you even for just five seconds then there will be such a major transformation in your body and mind. Then a realization will spring in you Aho! All worries are washed off. Just for a second, recognize that it only 'Me' in my enemy. I myself have started the Game. Understand this, but don't turn it into a mood making. Have this understanding only in the nivriti, not in the pravritti mode.

If we bring advaita (non-duality) in vyavahar (behavior), we only create more delusion. In pravritti, see duality. Taking up of the human form is impossible without pravritti. How much pravritti and nivriti one should have is a very sensitive matter. When there is more pravritti, then one becomes too negative and one is asked to be in nivriti. In India, dand (punishment) is called shiksha (education).

The word saja (punishment) comes from shiksha (education). Earlier, they would not punish someone out of anger but out of compassion. When there would be too much pravritti in someone, they would put him in a room (jail) providing food, sleep and rest. Like a doctor puts people in hospital when the body is sick, when our kritya (action) is sick, the karta (doer) is put in jail. When you have both pravritti and nivriti, you are successful.

35. It is not important whether you believe in spirituality or not, the four principles of spirituality apply to all from the moment one is born and will remain there till the end! Four principles of spirituality.

The First Principle states: "Whomsoever you encounter is the right one" This means that no

one comes into our life by chance. Everyone who is around us, anyone with whom we interact, represents something, whether to teach us something or to help us improve a current situation.

The Second Principle states: "Whatever happened is the only thing that could have happened" Nothing, absolutely nothing of that which we experienced could have been any other way. Not even in the least important detail. There is no "If only I had done that differently, then it would have been different". No. What happened is the only thing that could have taken place and must have taken place for us to learn our lesson in order to move forward. Every single situation in life which we encounter is absolutely perfect, even when it defies our understanding and our ego.

The Third Principle states: "Each moment in which something begins is the right moment" Everything begins at exactly the right moment, neither earlier nor later. When we are ready for it, for that something new in our life, it is there, ready to begin.

The Fourth Principle states: "What is over is over" It is that simple. When something in our life ends, it helps our evolution. That is why, enriched by the recent experience, it is better to let go and move on. Think it is no coincidence that you're here reading this. If these words strike a chord, it's because you meet the requirements and understand that not one single snowflake falls accidentally in the wrong place! Be good to yourself. Love with your whole being. Always be happy.

36. You have made me aware that you are God and you do not give me time.

Sri Sri: Because you are also god. But knowing that you are God cannot be applied in everyday life. Everything is wood, can you sit on the door. Periodic table says all elements are different and quantum physics says all is one. Know that all is god, follow the norms in the society, be a simple happy human being.

37. What do you see when you look at us?

Sri Sri. As an angel. I see a lot of possibilities in all. Some take a long time, some sooner. Each one a light house of happiness. See how you can be useful people around you.

38. Guruji, my work is too challenging.

Sri Sri: If it too much you will just quit. The fact that you are still in it. Face it

39. You are a Blue Pearl

Head understands head and heart understands heart. The nose can only smell; eyes can only see; ears can only hear. Similarly, the heart can only feel while the head can only think.

We try to put the heart in the head and the head in the heart and it doesn't seem to work. Your heart feels something is beautiful, whereas head says it is beautiful. We cling on to the word in the mind but we don't feel it. We repeat the word 'beautiful' in the head but it doesn't seem or feel beautiful.

Same thing about love, you talk too much about love, you get stuck in the head and it doesn't rise in the heart. In silence, love emits, radiates. We experience ourselves in the things we love more. That is why, when we lose the things we love, we feel hurt; we feel unhappy.

Suppose you love your piano very much and you hear that something has happened to your piano, something gets cut off in you. Or, if something happens to your car or your dog, you feel a loss. So you are not just living in your body, but also in that of the objects or people you love. But if you can expand this existence even more to cover the entirety, you will know that there is no loss and you are total.

You are a blue pearl. Blue is beautiful; blue is something that is big, vast and infinite. All that is immense and infinite in creation and that which has depth expresses itself in blue. The sky is blue, the ocean is blue. You are a blue pearl, in the sense that you can't be measured. You are so deep in your being. Though you are in the body, nobody can measure your being. The being in you is not just the blue infinity; it's a shining radiant infinity that is deep and immense. Blue pearl means that which is shining, that which is radiant, that which is infinite; yet, it seems to be finite.

When we start listening to our heart, then we know that all is one; and one God is in all. See, in our body we have so many cells and each cell has got its own life. Many cells are being born every day, many cells are dying but they do not know you. You know if something is wrong with one particular cell; you can feel it. Similarly, though we all have small lives, there is one life that covers and governs all the other lives.

We are all floating in an ocean of life; a big life. It is not just empty space all around us; it is lively big life and in the big sea of life there, all shells are floating and each shell has got a little water in it which is not the water separate from the water in the sea. So, we come out of our shells and experience, "I am not just in the body, but I am expanded all over; everywhere, it's me there and it's me here. I see myself in everybody".

40. Gurudev, Buddhists say they do not believe in God. Even Lord Buddha said that we must not worship idols. Now He too was an enlightened being, so what did he mean by that?

Sri Sri: Lord Buddha never talked about God. He never really entertained any discussion on God. What He said was – the first thing is to realize that there is misery. People keep denying there is misery, many don't even recognize it. Many a time if you talk to a sick person, he will say "I'm perfectly healthy and fine". The more egoistic the person, the greater is the denial.

Many times people are very miserable from within, but they wear a mask of cheerfulness or even act confident and dominating on the outside. They will keep pretending as if everything is fine, yet you can see the misery drip from their faces. Every part of their body reflects anger, bitterness, hatred and misery.

This is what Lord Buddha has said – that there is misery. Recognize it, and then there are remedies for it. If someone says being miserable is my nature, then nobody can do anything about it, not even God Himself. So misery is not our nature, it comes because of sanskaras (past life impressions) or karma and this can be removed by other sanskaras.

One remedy for this is Pratyahara (one of the eight limbs of Yoga which means to exercise control or restraint over the senses and withdraw those inwards). Another remedy to this is meditation. So through meditation, pranayama, and Satsang we can be liberated from the miseries. It is then that we come to realize that our nature is happiness, bliss.

Just as light dispels darkness, our Atma-shakti (the powerful soul as consciousness within) removes misery. On the path of Sadhana, all negativity and distortions such as fear, anger etc. fall away. The goal of Sadhana is get immersed in that indescribable bliss which is part of our very nature.

Lord Buddha said the same things that are said in the Upanishads.

There is a verse:

Na karmana na prajaya dhanena tyagenaike amrta tvamanasuh |
Parena nakam nihitam guhayam vibhrajate yadyatayo visanti ||
(Sanyasa Sukta, Maha Narayano Upanishad, 4.12)

It means: Neither through one's actions (Karma), nor by be getting noble progeny (referred to by 'Prajā' in the verse above), nor through wealth (Dhana) can one attain the Supreme Lord. Only through sacrifice and renunciation (Tyaga) can one attain immortality (Amruta).

This is what Lord Buddha has said as well. If you read the Upanishads carefully and then read that Lord Buddha has said, you will find they are the same. There is no difference at all.

That is why Shri Adi Shankaracharya is often called Prachanna Baudha (a hidden or unproclaimed Buddha, meaning an enlightened one), because whatever he said seemed to be so similar to what is mentioned in Buddhism. So there is no difference between the Sanatana Dharma (another name for Hinduism) and Buddhism. The principles are nearly the same. I won't say that they are exactly the same, but they are very close indeed.

Buddhism advocates Shoonyaavaad (the realization that "Everything is Nothing"; Shunya meaning Zero or nothing in Sanskrit), while Vedanta advocates Poornavaad (the central belief that "Everything is One and whole"). In Buddhism the first important step is the realization of misery, while in Vedanta they say that there is no misery. They say – 'Wake up and see! You are full of Joy (the Self as bliss)'.

So in Buddhism when misery disappears, joy is seen and in Vedanta when joy (of the Self) is realized, misery disappears automatically. So going from bottom to top and top to bottom, these are two different approaches. But the goal is the same. Even in Vedanta, it is not said that one should necessarily worship idols. It is said that worshipping the Atma-deva (referring to the Self as the Divine deity housed within the temple of the physical body) is the highest form of worship. But to begin with, one needs an environment, an atmosphere for reaching that stage of worship. This is why there is Puja. Ultimately at one point you see everything as the expansion of yourself, everything appears as a manifestation of that one self.

When one realizes that there is no difference between the world and the Self (Brahman) - which is present everywhere, in the trees, in the idols, in the earth, in water, in the blue sky; then one can worship anything and anywhere (meaning: to reach a stage where one sees everything as the manifestation of the one divine Self).

Even in the Rudra Puja, there is a rule that 'Na Rudram Rudram Archayeti' which means until you become Lord Shiva yourself (realize your own true divine nature), you cannot worship the Lord.

So you should first become God and then worship Him. It means to be firmly established in the Self. So it is said to worship God after becoming God, being established in your Self. Puja is just a play, it is a leela (a game), a way of expressing this deep feeling of worship.

41. Move on and be free. Stop looking for more, then you will be free and compassion will flow from you.
42. Intimacy is dissolving into infinity, which brings you to the moment. You go beyond the events. Look beyond the events, dissolve into infinity, and be in the moment. This is the way to maintain intimacy.

43. When you feel you are free of shackles and barriers, and you feel light and happy, that is Moksha. Even if someone abuses you, and you say, "You curse so well!" then that is Moksha. Recognize the cause of the barrier – and be free from it.

44. Gurudev, for a Yogi this world is a penance, and for a Bhogi being alone is a penance. Can there be life beyond penance?

Sri Sri: Penance makes us strong. A Yogi is all alone in the forest and he feels happy. But when he is amongst people, and they pounce on him, pull his leg, or cause him pain, yet if he does not get angry and remains calm in his mind, then he has won.

For a Yogi being alone is very easy. But for him to be comfortable and happy amongst people is a penance and a skill, which is necessary.

Similarly, a Bhogi is very comfortable in a crowd. But if he gets depressed being alone, then eventually he will be unhappy being in a crowd too. Why is this? It is because there is no fulfillment inside.

If you cannot be happy with yourself, then how can you be happy with others? That is why, when you spend some time in silence, and sometime by yourself, you become so content from inside. Then you will not long for attention, or for some praise from others.

45. Asuya – fault-finding eyes, gives you the idea, "The whole world is not sharp, the whole world is no good".

Anasuya is knowing, "It is my own vision of the world that is blurred" and once you discover you have the wrong vision, half of the problem has already disappeared.

46. Know Yourself to Experience Joy

Have you ever thought what the purpose of your life is? What is life all about? These questions are very precious. When these questions dawn in your mind, only then your life begins. These questions help you improve the quality of your life.

But, when these questions come into your mind, do not be in a hurry to get an answer. Those who know will not tell you and those who tell you, do not know. These questions are the tools by which you can dig deeper and the answers come from within you. To know what you are on this planet for, find out what you are not here for. You are not here to grumble, you are not here to complain or blame. This will help you learn how to be in life. Life involves ups and downs, which is very natural. Do not be afraid of this.

Make your smile cheaper. Learn to smile more. You know what happens when you smile? All the muscles in your face relax. The nerves in your brain relax, and you get the confidence, courage and energy to move on in life.

Enthusiasm is the nature of life. Take every opportunity to praise others and support their enthusiasm, this makes life lively. If you put down other's enthusiasm, the same may happen to you. Become one whose enthusiasm never dies.

Any joy you experience in life is from the depth of yourself, when you let go all that you hold on to and settle down. If for the whole day, you are engaged in only gathering information; you do not take out time for yourself to think and reflect. You feel dull and tired. The quality of your life deteriorates. So during the day, take out some moments for yourself. Sit for a few minutes, get into the cave of your heart, eyes closed, and kick the world away like a ball.

Only when you are calm and pleasant inside can you spread it in your outside world. The higher goals in life can only be realised through a few minutes of meditation and introspection. The deeper you are able to rest, the more dynamic your performance will be and the more dynamic will you be in activity.

All our struggles in life are to know more. There's always something to share, learn and teach. Always be open to learn. Do not restrict and limit yourself. Communicate with others, share ideas, share information and seek the same. When you are centred, you become a powerful communicator and when your communication improves, your life improves.

You should plan your short and long-term goals. Then, life gets a direction to flow. Give yourself the freedom to dream and think big. Have the courage and determination to achieve those dreams that are dear to you. This world is varied and beyond our imagination. We are all born in this world to do something wonderful and unique; do not let this opportunity pass by. Start 'living' life rather than just existing.

47. Infinite Patience and Smart Shopping

Suppose you go to God, get a boon, and walk away. When your intention is to get a boon, then you are in a hurry. Another person who knows he owns God is not in a hurry for anything. Infinite patience comes up in him.

When you know you own God, you are not in a hurry to get something out of God. Your hurry to get something throws you off balance and makes you small. Have "eternal wait," infinite patience. When you have infinite patience, you will realize God belongs to you. Either through awareness or through practice you reach the same spot.

Question: What do you mean by "owning God?"

Sri Sri: The Divinity belongs to you. It's not like shopping at the supermarket in a hurry and rushing back home. When you see the whole store is at home, you are not in a hurry to shop. You are at ease.

Question: To develop patience do we just observe the impatience?

Sri Sri: Just observe the thoughts and feelings and don't regret about it.

When you know you are part of the divine plan, you stop demanding. Then you know everything is being done for you. You are taken care of. Usually we do it the other way: we hurry the mind and are slow in our action. Impatience means hurry in the mind; lethargy means slowness in action. Patience in the mind and dynamism in action is the right formula.

48. Gururupayah:

Essence: Guru is the means. Once you accept someone as your Guru, in time you will be able to see the nature of the Guru in yourself.

49. Stop and See Where Your Life is Going

So what should we discuss today?

I am playing the role of the speaker and you are all listeners. How nice it would be for me to know what is it that you want to know tonight. You can think of topics.

You know, to discuss something, which is very dear to our hearts, we need to be in an informal atmosphere. A formal atmosphere is not congenial for wisdom; for authenticity, have a habit of doing everything in an informal way.

So let us begin by turning around and greeting the person in front of you, next to you and behind you. Become familiar with everyone around you.

I want to ask you a question.

Did you really greet the person or did you do it as a formality?

You don't have to tell that to the person next to you. You don't have to tell them, 'Hey, I just greeted you as a formality'.

I want you to ask yourself, did you really greet the person?

You know when you get off the plane, the air hostesses greet you saying, 'Have a nice day',

but they don't mean it. It is just coming from the lips. But if the same words come to you from your mother, or sister, or a close friend, it carries some vibration with it. So we convey more through our vibrations.

Someone can stand and give you a talk about love for two hours, but that does not convey what a baby or dog conveys to you through vibrations. You go into a place where people are depressed, you will see that for no reason you are also depressed. Similarly, you go to a place where people are happy and you feel the joy coming up within you.

The whole world is just vibrations; waves and waves. Our mind is vibrations, our body is all vibrations, thoughts are vibrations and our emotions are all vibrations. But we don't do anything to improve the vibrations, the positivity in us, isn't it? That something, doing which, your vibrations become very joyful, positive and peaceful, is Meditation. This happens very fast through the breathing techniques and meditation.

Usually when one says Meditation, you think, one has to leave everything and go to Machu Picchu, or somewhere in the Himalayas; no, it is not like that. You can experience it in your own home.

And what are the benefits of meditation? Why should we do it? As I said, our vibrations become positive.

Sometimes, when you meet someone, you feel some repulsion and you don't want to talk to that person. Have you experience this? and then, there are some people that you meet, and you feel like talking to them and engaging with them. Again, this is vibration.

Similarly, you get some thoughts, and they are absolutely right and at other times, you get thoughts that are completely wrong. Isn't that so?

So, we are like walking in the darkness without understanding our own consciousness. If you understand consciousness, a lot of things happen and your life becomes much happier. Our health becomes better, our relationships with people improves. You must have heard from people, how the violent tendencies in life go down and most important, our desires get fulfilled.

There are four kinds of people.

Some people have desires, and they desire and desire but nothing gets manifested.

There are others who desire and work so hard for it, and then after a long time, it gets manifested.

The third one is those who desire, and immediately it gets done, without much hard work. The fourth one are those who don't even have to desire, even before the desire arises,

things are already there.

So which category do you want to be in?

Fourth one, Yes that is the luckiest. It is just like, you have not even felt thirst and already there is water.

There is a proverb in India which says, 'When you had teeth, you didn't get peanuts, and when you got peanuts, you didn't have teeth. Many people are in this situation. They work so hard all their life, make all the money, put it all in the bank and they die and then the children fight over the money of the parents. In the world, about 70% of the court cases are about inheritance.

Now, see nobody fights over the money they have earned. So what you have done is, you have made money, put it in the bank and then made your children fight with each other for the money. Is this an intelligent thing to do?

We spend half of our health in earning money, and then we spend half of our wealth to get the health back. Not so smart! We need to find where life is going? We keep working and we keep on doing things without knowing - What is the Purpose! Without even enjoying all that this nature has provided us Not so smart! Not so economical.

See, when the mind is bitter, you can't find happiness anywhere in the world. When the mind is sweet, then you find sweetness everywhere. So meditation is all about finding sweetness deep inside and when you find it, do you know what you want to do? You want to give it to everybody. That something, doing which, your vibrations become very joyful, positive and peaceful, is Meditation.

We need to find where life is going?

There is a story of a wise fool!

A wise fool was sitting on a donkey, and the donkey was running. It went round and round the same streets many times. So someone asked this gentleman, 'I see you going up and down several times, where are you going?'

He says, 'I don't know, ask the donkey!'

Most of the time, our lives are that way. We keep working and we keep on doing things without knowing - What is the Purpose! Without even enjoying all that this nature has provided us.

People ask me, 'what is your motivation? What do you get? Why are you running around to all these places around the world all the time?'

I asked them one question, 'suppose you see a very nice movie, what do you do? Do you just sit quiet in your room? Or do you pick up the phone, call your friends and tell them, 'Oh, it is a great movie, you must go and see this movie'. Now what do you get by doing that? Do the movie producers give you some commission? Or the actors give you some money? What do you get for making all those phone calls? You do it because the nature of joy is to share'.

The nature of joy is sharing.

There are two types of joy; one is the joy of grabbing. As kids we were born with this tendency. If you leave a child here, it will go and grab this flower, grab this sheet, pull that chair, turn everything around upside down, and hold on to things.

It will hold on to anything, even a knife. Without knowing it is going to hurt its hand, the child will grab a knife. But mothers are very clever; they will give the child something else to loosen the child's grip from the knife. Isn't that so? When children catch on to something that is not good, you give them something else.

So this is one type of joy, the joy of getting, having. This is a childish joy; childish happiness. There is another type of happiness, joy that comes from giving.

Many ladies here, when guests are coming home, or children are coming home, what do you do? You make many different types of food and decorate it and put it on the table. Your joy as a mother is in giving isn't it!

Look at grandparents; they love to give gifts to the children, isn't it?! There is a joy in giving, and this is a mature joy. We cannot live life by just having the joy of getting without understanding the joy in giving.

Once you have a little taste of the joy that comes from giving, you will find that life is worth living, life is fulfilling. So, smile more!

You know a baby smiles 400 times a day, a adolescent smiles only 17 times and an adult rarely smiles and if you become an officer or a politician, then forget about it. Your smile disappears, flies away.

A smile is not something artificial, it should come from within. That can only happen when the stress is gone, when we go deep in meditation.

If someone says, 'I am meditating', that means that they smile more; there is serenity, sensitivity and sensibility, and this is spirituality.

Spirituality means sensibility, sensitivity, sweetness, smile; all these put together.

50. Guruji, is this the only path that leads to supreme peace and happiness?

Sri Sri: If you ask me that water is the only answer to quench your thirst, what can I say? What can I say if you ask me if breathing is the only way to fill the lungs? Any path, which leads you to inner peace, tranquility, joy and love, is the path. All paths are essentially just one. The methods may be many.

Someone may instruct you, 'Do Pranayama like this'. Someone else may instruct you in a different way saying, 'Do Pranayama like this'. Someone may ask you to not do it at all. So there are many different ways.

What we have seen over the years is that these techniques (taught by The Art of Living) are suitable for this age, for our generation and the people. It is a time-tested thing and everyone is comfortable with this.

You see, in the past, people did not have much to do. They would throw the seeds in the field and would simply sit to watch them grow. They would keep watch to ensure that the birds do not destroy their crop. So they had time, and they could meditate for eight hours or so. But it is not necessary for you to meditate for eight hours every day. Just do the Sudarshan Kriya for ten minutes every day that is good.

Some people attend the Vipassana Meditation course for ten days, where they watch the breath for ten days, and then finally at the end of the ten days, they feel some sensations in the body. You can feel the same sensations in those ten minutes of doing the Sudarshan Kriya also. It is your choice whether you want to sit for eight to ten days to discover that there is sensation in your body; or that your body is hollow and empty.

I am not saying that it is bad or anything of that sort. Everything has its own value. When you observe silence in the four or five days of the Advanced Course and do different meditations, and then when you stand up to do Yoga and Pranayama, it increases the circulation and energizes the body. It also brings experiences along with it.

Luckily in The Art of Living, we have all the avenues open (for one to go deep within). We have the knowledge, we have the devotional aspect in the Narada Bhakti Sutras (A commentary on the Aphorisms of Love by Sage Narada); then we have the intellectual inquiry and stimulant in the Ashtavakra Gita. We have the knowledge of Yoga through the Patanjali Yoga Sutras. So it is complete from all aspects: for our awareness, our well being, and it is also very scientific. I believe we should go ahead in a scientific manner and not by blind faith. That is the speciality of The Art of the Living.

51. Gurudev I need your guidance. I am a mother and a wife, and I run a small school. There are times when things go wrong entirely, and I can't concentrate or be myself at my workplace. How do I manage that?

Sri Sri: It is okay if it is only sometimes. But if it is often then we need to attend to it. First of all, know that as an individual, you have the capacity to multi-task. If you think, 'Oh, I am a mother, I cannot be good at the office. It is not possible for me'; or, 'I am an office goer, so I am not doing justice to my children', these sorts of conflicts weighs very heavy on your emotions and your mind. First you should know that you have the capacity to be a mother, a good wife, and a good officer or a good business woman. Resolve the conflict right at the root, instilling confidence in your capabilities.

The second is that, it is the quality of time and not the quantity of time that is important in whatever you are doing. You don't have to spend 10 hours with your kids. Even one hour that you spend with your kids, if you are there with them a 100%, that makes them more satisfied.

The root cause of all this is stress. If you don't relax and relieve stress, at least for a few minutes every day, whatever concepts you may have in your head, will be blown away by your emotions because our emotions are much stronger than our thoughts. Many times we remain determined, but the surge of emotions, anger, frustration, desires, when they come, it just blows everything away.

The intellect, or all our concepts, are like the gatekeeper of the house. Emotions are like the owner of the house. When the owner of the house comes in, the gatekeeper has no-way to stop him. You just have to let him in. We have to set right the emotions inside. That is where meditation, Sudarshan Kriya, pranayama, come very handy.

52. You should not become possessive. When your attachment becomes possessiveness, then you are troubling the person that you are attached to, and you can bring trouble to yourself as well.

53. How to deal with the situation where you love someone and you are not loved back?

Sri Sri: It's a challenge! Your love is not dependent on their love. Love is not a business. I love you because I have no choice, but to love. Love is not an action; it's a state. Either you express love in its natural form, it it's opposites like jealousy, greed and hatred get formed.

54. Gurudev, how do we get our sankalpas accomplished?

Sri Sri: These cell phones are so powerful that you can reach anybody in the world through it. So, the mind which has made these cell phones, won't that be more powerful than this? If these radiations can produce such effect, what effect would human radiations produce? The Sankalpa that one takes for the goodness of society, that definitely gets accomplished. Drop your worries and the Divine will care of you. Be in the innocent state of surrender.

55. "When you feel weak I am with you as your strength, you are not alone".

56. Make your home God's home and there be light, love and abundance. Make your body God's abode and there will be peace and bliss. Feel your mind as a toy of God and you'll watch and enjoy all its games.

57. Guruji, there is celebration in your presence. How to keep up the same celebrative mindset in your physical absence?

Sri Sri: To keep up with the same celebrative mindset you need to inculcate certain disciplines. Follow certain things. They are:

a) Not talk too much. Talking too much makes a person tired. Then while you are conversing a lot of 'buts' and 'ifs' will arise. This may lead to an unnecessary argument and then end up in an unnecessary bitterness! So it is better to talk less.

b) Then second thing is often you make a plan and talk on the plan too much. There is no need to think over and over again on the plan and explain to someone about it.

c) The third thing is if you are not able to enthuse people, at least don't lose your enthusiasm.

d) Then the fourth thing is, do not engage yourself in eating or sleeping too much. Or even watching TV, or reading books. These in turn can reduce your enthusiasm.

The best thing would be is to be with your self. Listen to music. Exercise and do some yoga. That way you will be able to retain your enthusiasm.

58. Gurudev, Your Holiness, do you believe in evil?

Sri Sri: I don't believe in evil but I know that evil is the shadow of lack of goodness. It is an absence of goodness, absence of love, and absence of light.

In India we believe in six types of evil: Pride, Greed, Arrogance, Jealousy, Anger and Lust. Any of these distortions of love, or lack of knowledge, lack of wisdom can destroy one's life.

59. How can one experience the mind, intellect, memory and the Self as separate from each other?

Sri Sri: When you are listening to whatever I am saying, your mind is the one that is listening through your ears. When you listen to music, you hear it through your mind. But when you ask questions about something, you do so through the intellect. So it is the mind that is responsible for listening to the music that is playing; it is the mind that experiences the hotness or coldness of touch. But the faculty, or the level of existence that tries to understand what you experience (through the mind), is the intellect. Then, when you feel, 'I want this', or, 'I don't want this', then that 'I' reflects the ego. Remembering this entire experience is the function of the memory.

These are really four different functions of one consciousness.

60. Who are the people who have been the most influential in your life to make you who you are today, and who have helped you build your philosophy?

Sri Sri: It is very difficult to say. If I just take a few names I won't be doing justice. But it starts from my mother.

When you are in the moment, when your mind is here right now, then you're able to draw inspiration from everyone around you. Anytime, anywhere, people can inspire you. It is an internal phenomenon.

So I find that inspiration is opening that source of energy within you, and anyone can become a catalyst for that. A child in the street can inspire you, a carpenter can inspire you, and a gardener can inspire you. You only need to have that willingness to take the inspiration.

61. Would you speak about the importance of silence? How do we practice it?

Sri Sri: (Maintains a few moments of silence) that's it! Take a moment, observe your breath, calm your mind, and relax your body. You find such peace and so much love within you.

We are all born with this gift of love and peace. Somehow we forget to look within, which is of utmost importance. A few moments to introspection is very necessary. Either eyes open or closed, being in the moment, now, and relaxing suddenly connects you to yourself.

62. When mistakes happen, see it as a happening. Through whom it happened is secondary. If you adopt this approach, it makes you very centered, and you feel connected with everybody. The mind becomes free from anger, jealousy, greed, and all these negative imperfections.

63. Is longing all right?

Sri Sri: If tears come out of longing, then know that longing itself, is God. Longing shows and a person's maturity and the height of that person's presence. For love to exist, longing has to be there. Love and longing go hand in hand.

64. Could you talk to me about your own problems? What are your problems?

Sri Sri: You know, my biggest problem is that I am a dreamer. Knowing very well that there is violence, there are problems in the world, I still dream of a violence-free society; a violence free world and I know it will take its own time, but I can't give up my dream. This is my big problem. I hold on to it.

If you read newspapers and watch television, it looks or appears like we are so far away from this dream, but yet I see the same dream: to see the world united in love and peace. I dream of a violence-free and stress-free society.

65. "Enjoy your silence and you will be fountain of love. Brahman is no inertia, no aversion, it is only bliss"

66. When someone criticizes me I switch off and go into hiding. How to handle criticism without arguing and fighting?

Sri Sri: Know that you're magnanimous. Every time you face a criticism know that you are vast like the ocean, and you can take in anything. When you feel small that is when you don't feel like taking criticism. When you feel you are very big, and then you think, 'I am much bigger than this criticism, let me take it in'.

67. The one I have full faith in has duped me and hurt me. What armour should I wear that I don't get hurt!

Sri Sri: You have put your faith in the wrong place. Put your faith in the Almighty and you will see that nothing can hurt you or dupe you.

The biggest place you get duped from is your own mind!

When the faith is in the Divine then you stop being a taker and an asker and become a giver. Ask and take from God, and give in the world. Don't do it the other way around by Asking from the world and giving to God.

68. Suffering is a creation of your mind. The greatest illusion is imagining that some person or situation is the cause of your suffering.

69. Organization

The entire creation is a huge organization. Everything is made up of atoms. The whole world is nothing but organization where the atoms have decided to organize themselves in a specific pattern to form a particular substance and those particular patterns bring them specific qualities.

Death, decay, transformation happens when the atoms get bored of patterns and decide to recognise themselves.

For example, when the atoms of the apple say "Enough of being an apple", that's when the rotting starts. If there is never boredom of patterns, there can be no decay.

The movement from one organized state to another is also organized. This is the transient organization, which we call chaos. This transient organization may need a catalyst. Knowledge is such a catalyst. So, you have absolutely no escape from organization.

70. Guruji, in Hindu religion it is said that a husband and wife relationship lasts for 7 lifetimes. How will I know which lifetime am I currently in?

Sri Sri: If you are in love right now, then know it is the first lifetime and you are going to live together for six lifetimes more. If you are tired of the relationship then know that seven lifetimes are completed and this is the last one.

It depends on you! You decide which lifetime this is or think it is neither here nor there, somewhere in the middle.

71. Are You Happy - Secrets To Happiness

Every living creature wants to be happy. Whether it is money, power or sex, you seek it for the sake of happiness. Some people even seem to enjoy misery because it gives them

happiness!

To be happy, you seek something. But despite getting it, you are not happy. The wise are happy with what they have and happy with what they don't have. Fools are unhappy with what they have and what they don't have. Misery is not given by anyone or anything in life. It is your own mind, which makes you miserable or happy and uplifted.

If you are absolutely content with what you have there is no aspiration in life. It is important to have aspirations but if you are feverish about your aspirations, that itself becomes an impediment. If a cup is held under a tap that is running at full force that cup will never be full. Run the tap water at the right speed and the cup fills up. This is what happens with people who are too ambitious or feverish. Just have the intention, "This is what I want" — and let go.

Happiness is when you want nothing, and you want to give. Where the wanting and desires end, and the sharing begin, happiness is exactly there. Memory is not happiness. When you are happy, you forget everything. It is when happiness is gone that you dwell in its memory. In the world, people are either dreaming of happiness or remembering happiness. That is either being in the past or the future. But happiness is that which is in the present and it is your very nature.

Once a wise man drew a line on a board and told his student to make the line shorter without touching or erasing it. How would you do it? You have to shorten a line without touching it. The intelligent one (referring to the student) then drew a much longer line underneath that line. So, the line automatically became shorter.

The lesson here is that if your difficulties appear to be very big, lift your eyes because you are only focused on yourself. If you lift your eyes up and look at those who are in a worse condition than you, you will suddenly feel that your burden is not as bad as you thought it was. If you think you have some big problem, look at people who have a greater problem. Suddenly, you will get a confidence that my problem is much smaller, and I can manage it.

So, the first point on how to be happy is to see the world where there are greater and bigger problems. Then, your problems will appear smaller. The moment your problems appear smaller, you will get the energy and confidence to deal with it or solve it. In simple words, serve those who are in greater need.

Second, look at your own life. In the past, you had many problems. They have all come and gone. Know that even this will go and you do have the energy and power to overcome it. You will get self-confidence by understanding and looking at your own past.

Third, and most important, do some breathing exercise and relaxation. Relaxing through meditation and breathing exercises can handle this. When one is relaxed, one realizes that they are loved, and connected to everybody, and are a part of the whole universe. This will

liberate you and the mind will completely shift. You will then find so much harmony around.

Fourth, do you know, in anger we say, 'I give up'. Without frustration or anger say, 'I give this problem up, I cannot solve it, let the Divine help me' and know that you will always be helped. Have the confidence that you will be helped; a power in the universe is going to help you.

The fifth one – what do you think is the fifth one? I leave it to you. You think about the fifth one. I can go on up to twenty-five or thirty (points), but I would like you to come up with it. We are always looking for solutions from someone. We forget that if we turn our mind inward, we can get some idea, some solution. This is the fifth one.

There are two ways of looking at life. One is thinking: "I'll be happy after achieving a certain objective". The second is saying: "I am happy come what may!" Which one do you want to live by? Life is 80% joy and 20% misery. But you hold on to the 20% and make it 200%! It is not a conscious act, it just happens. Living in the moment with joy, alertness, awareness and compassion is enlightenment. Being like a child is enlightenment. It is being free from within, feeling at home with everybody, without barriers.

Spontaneity! Be spontaneous. Spontaneity will come when you take a few minutes to go deep within yourself. There is nothing great in smiling when everything is normal, and when everything is going the way you want. But if you awaken the valor inside of you, and say, 'Come what may, I am going to keep smiling', you will notice tremendous energy, just rise from within you and the problem is like nothing; it just comes and disappears.

All of one's life is spent in preparing to be happy someday in the future. It's like making your bed all night, but having no time to sleep in it. How many minutes, hours and days of your life have you spent being happy from within? Those are the only moments you have really lived life. Those were perhaps the days when you were a small kid, completely blissful and happy or a few moments when you were surfing, swimming or sailing or on a mountain top, living in the present and enjoying it.

72. We should be present and give presents to everyone. Everyone who comes to you should leave with a smile!

73. Many people come here. Some come just to visit this place and say, "Oh nice!" and go away. Some feel nice, come inside and feel, "Oh nice energy!" They take few deep breaths and go back. For one or two days, they are in a good state of mind. A few others come and take a little more, and a few other come and just loot (grasp) everything!

I want some people like that, who just come and take everything. If you can loot, loot. The shop is open. Loot as much as you can. Transport will also be arranged for you - loot and

take it away! Loot however much is possible for you. There is nothing more to say.

74. "When a flower hits you, it wakes you up, but you don't feel a pinch. Beauty is such an awakening. Beauty shakes you somewhere so deep inside that you cannot be in sleep"

75. It is not right behavior to curse and speak ill of others around you, and only think well of yourself. Such behavior shows a lack of intelligence and maturity in the person.

76. The Five Insights

Love is your nature. But in the process of its expression, you often get caught up in the object. This is when your sight is caught outside. To return back to your nature, you need insight.

Pain is the first insight. It takes you away from the object and turns you towards your body and mind.

Energy is the second insight. A bolt of energy brings you back to your Self.

Divine Love is the third insight. A glimpse of Divine love makes you so complete and over rules all the relative pleasures.

Trance is the fourth insight. An elevation of consciousness and partial awareness of the physical reality around is Trance.

The conviction in the non-dual existence, that all is made up of one and only one, is the fifth insight.

When love glows, it is bliss. When it flows, it is compassion. When it blows, it is anger. When it ferments, it is jealousy. When it is all numbers, it is hatred. When it acts, it is perfection. When love knows, it is ME!

77. Are you happy now? This is what my job is! To make everyone happy and you can be happy only through knowledge. Nothing else. Not the knowledge from reading books, but knowledge about life. What do I want from life? Who am I? How am I behaving? How do I react to other's behavior? And keeping your mind happy no matter what. This is knowledge and this is what will make you happy. Nothing else.

78. Questions and answers come from the same source. When we become quiet, either question disappears or answer comes. Seeker asks the question, gets an answer, gets satisfied and goes.

A Devotee simply sings dances and expresses love! A Wise person simply drinks Silence.

79. When we wait, we always wait for the event. Focus is on the event. Like one is waiting for bus or train to come! But when we shift the focus from event to the moment, then you are in now, now, now. That is meditation. Meditation is waiting in the moment for nothing!

80. Be Loved

You don't need to worry to maintain knowledge. When knowledge is lodged in you as wisdom, it will never leave you. Wisdom lodges itself in your heart.

Make the Divine your Valentine (your sweet Beloved). This is the last thing to do and the first thing to do. Keep your heart in a safe place; it is too delicate. Events, small things make strong impressions on it and you cannot find a better place than the Divine to keep your heart safe and your mind sane. When you keep your heart in the Divine, the moving time, the passing events, will not be able to touch it, will not create a scar.

A precious stone needs a setting around it, gold or silver, to hold it and to wear it; so wisdom and knowledge are that setting around the heart, which will hold it in the Divine.

See the Divine in your Valentine and make the Divinity your Valentine (your sweet beloved). Just BE and know that you are loved. That is beloved.

81. Guru Is the Goal

Guru is nothing but wisdom and love. Guru is that principle, which is wisdom and love, and that, is awakened in each one who has stepped onto the path. You also call that person a Guru in whom there is no gap between life and wisdom and love. Often one recognizes wisdom but sees a gap between wisdom and one's own life. The purpose of becoming a disciple is to bridge that gap. Being with the Guru means spontaneous integration of life and wisdom.

82. Boone – 7-July-2014

We want perfection and that causes anger. If you keep a little room for imperfection you can manage better. So slow down - drive behind a bicycle it can be very irritating. We are

getting more and more impatient and want everything to be the way we want it to be. Creation is a forest not a structured garden. You cannot trim everyone into a garden. Even then it will become haphazard in three months! Keep this analogy. You cannot weed the entire forest. Give them their space. Let them grow at their own speed.

We need to create the space for imperfection - I am telling for especially for people who are short tempered - not for those who procrastinate. Don't spoil your own peace. How long are you going to be on this planet? Have they ever changed by your shouting? No. It doesn't happen. Has someone changed by bashing someone? It's like allopathy - doesn't touch the root cause only addresses symptoms. These are high pitta types. Just relax.

Vata and kapha type - you don't even care if there is perfection or not. Their room itself will tell you their type are equal. Identify what type we are and know there is scope of change in each type to bring harmony.

83. Know Your Group Type

Normally in the world people with similar tendencies group together; intelligent people group together, fools get together, happy people get together, ambitious people get together and disgruntled people also group together to celebrate their problems! (Laughter) There is a saying, "Birds of a feather flock together".

The disgruntled people get together; they complain and pull each other down. A frustrated person cannot be with someone happy because the other is not dancing to their tune. You only feel comfortable when the other person is in tune with you. Intelligent people do not feel at home with foolish people. Foolish people feel that intelligent ones are not humane. One with wisdom feels at home with the disgruntled as well as the happy, foolish and intelligent. Similarly, people with all these tendencies also feel at home with the wise.

Just turn around and look at what goes on in your group – are you grateful or grumbling? Take responsibility to uplift the people around you. That is Satsang, not just singing and leaving.

The wise person is like the sky where all birds can fly.

84. Sometimes there seems to be conflict between love for my own country and the idea of a One World Family. Can the smaller be dropped for a bigger cause?

Sri Sri: I do not see any conflict between the two. One can have love for one's own country, and at the same time have love for humanity. You can do both. It is just like how a family person serves his family, but at the time also comes out and serves the society. It is not that if you are into social service, you must neglect your family. That is not right. You have to do

both, you have to attend to the family and also do your social service.

Now, if a family member is upset for no reason, and then what can you do. But from your side, you should make sure that you do not do anything to upset anyone. In the same way, you can serve the country, and also be part of a One World Family.

Moreover, hating somebody is not patriotism. Patriotism does not mean that you are against the others. You are not against anybody, but at the same time you protect your country, and work towards its development. This is Dharma.

In Mahabharata also, Lord Krishna never advised the Pandavas to hate the enemy. He never spoke about hate. Lord Krishna said, 'Yudhyasva vigata-jvarah'. Fight without feverishness.

If you fight with feverishness in your mind then you will be disturbed. Fight with a calm mind. That is why he said, 'Yogastha kuru karmani'. (Meaning: Be steady in yoga and do whatever you must do. Give up attachment; be indifferent to failure and success. This stability is Yoga). India has fostered such high ideals and have set an example for the rest of the world.

85. Gurudev, There are many things in my life which I think are not ok. I don't know what to do about these things?

Sri Sri: When you say, 'It's not ok, it's not ok', the seed of 'not ok' is not letting your mind to relax. You have to accept things as they are. 'It's not ok, it's not ok' keeps you all outside.

When you are hanging on to the discomfort, how can you ever be comfortable?

Those imperfections are there for a cause or purpose. It is going to be ok, it will take some time. Things are ok the way they are now.

They will be ok in the future whatever happened in the past was ok. When you understand this, you relax, and in that relaxation you can meditate.

When you want to retire, it's nivriti but when you want to come out (of rest) it's pravritti. Then you can act.

When you are tired but you are hanging on to what is not ok - then you cannot retire. When you have to chill out, what do you say? 'Everything is perfect,' otherwise you can't chill, you can't act! It is neither pravritti, nor nivriti.

Dhyan yoga is nivriti, Karma yoga is pravritti.

Most people are hanging onto the 'not ok' and are unable to relax, to enjoy life, to chill, to be creative. They are holding onto the seed of 'not ok'. That person, this situation, the government, and the administration - everything is not ok.

Then it comes to you - I am not ok. Subtly, it reflects on you that you are not OK. Then you don't like that feeling, and to cover that up, you make up many justifications and the mind is all confused.

If tamogun is too much, you don't know the pravritti or the nivriti, there is total inertia and lethargy.

When Rajogun prevails then its half way through - you regret and act, there is confusion and chaos, many of us act and then we regret. Mother scolds her child, regrets it and then becomes nice.

When there is Satva, then we know what to act, when to act, whether to act or not. In Satva, you don't regret, you retire and relax, there is clarity.

There is no strict border between the three gunas. It is very fluid, one flows into another.

86. Brain Cell and Universe has same structure.

How to remove greif?

There are two reasons for greif i.e. Mind and Past.

There was a man who gave house keys to his son and went on world trip. When he came back saw his house burning. He cried and his son told he has already sold it. That very moment he got happy. So state of mind changed suddenly as the house is no longer his. So it's all mind game.

To remove fanaticism we need to use skills with patience and perseverance. We need to put them on jail (talking about Middle East).

87. How to make friends to come into spiritually?

Sri Sri: Tell your friends that I want a gift from you and ask them to come to happiness program. The people have fear / guilt due to many things in name of religion or spirituality is doing that. Tell your friends that it's for happiness, kindness & inner joy. Tell them to come once. Skillfully you need to manage that.

88. Antidote of unhealthy ego is naturalness. Inferiority complex only brings ego. Knowledge brings awareness that am 1 among so many billion people. Just like a sand particle on a beach.

How insignificant you are in the universe. Knowledge vanishes the ego and perspective of time and space life changes and ego dissolves. Let the ego be there to bring good changes in society. That is the purpose nature has put it. Ego is there to face the challenges. I will get over it. Come what may I will not let my happiness go. This is positive ego.

Why to get rid of ego. Keep your ego in your pocket. Pull out at times of difficult and challenges.

Don't put barrier between you and other person. If someone comments closer to you.. You accept. If some unknown does you bring garbage in mind. Don't put defense if someone comments. Have compassion to them. In either case you don't have to react. Any one can have any opinions. Thank them they have guts to say their opinion. Thank them. If someone says you donkey. Don't waste your energy and go your bp go up. It's unwarranted. Save your mind and your state. It is more important than that.

If spouse is upset be quiet. Saying it's not my time. Other time give back. Enjoy the firebricks sometimes. Don't make it a war.

89. Gurujji, how can we make utterly materialistic people realize the importance and urgency of meditation in today's gloomy economic situation?

Sri Sri: Here, memory of the past will help you. See in the past, after World War II or before that, the world was in such a big crisis. There was very little food and people had limited resources because everything was destroyed, but then people did survive. We have seen worse periods on this planet. Before independence, in India, there have been so many crises.

We have undergone so many types of crisis - There was drought, floods, famine and a big plague. But people have survived all those hard times as well. It is not any harder than what it was in the past centuries, so, don't worry; we have survived those tough times. Now is when we need to encourage more human values. We need to be of help to each other, share with each other and live together. We need to have good communication with people around us. This human touch is what will give us strength to overcome the crisis.

When you know there are bunches of people who are behind you, who are supporting you, why would you be afraid of anything? If you have faith in the consciousness, in the Divinity, it is bound to take care of you, why would you be gloomy? So, you should make every crisis into an opportunity to turn towards the Divinity, turn towards humanity and turn towards the inner light.

90. Love never says enough! It is always infinity, not limited. Longing without love is incomplete. Love without longing is also incomplete. Be brave and be clear in your heart. Know that whatever is yours will always come back to you!

91. Inner Grace

Everybody asks for blessings. Usually people say, "Guruji, please give me blessings". Even if someone doesn't want anything, they need blessings! Whichever Guru you go to, the only words, which come out, are, "Give me blessings" and these are mere words tumbling out of your mouth. But how do we obtain blessings? We have not learnt this.

There is no dearth of blessings. You get more blessings than necessary. There is sunlight, a burning blaze of bright light all 12 hours of the day, but your doors and windows are tightly shut. Then, how is it possible for light to enter? If the sun's light has to reach you, you cannot sit in a dark room and keep chanting on a microphone, "I want sunlight, I want sunlight!" This will not bring the sunlight in. You have to open the doors and windows, so that light may enter on its own.

When you ask for blessings, you should have an honest and clean mind. When you have a truthful mind, that mind becomes capable of receiving and absorbing blessings. When does the mind become truthful? When there is nothing to hide, no dirt in the mind and the mind is open. Blessings should only be asked with an open mind.

If somebody asks, "How are you?" you answer saying, "I am fine". You, in reality, will not be fine at that point in time. In spite of that, you say, "I am fine, doing very well and on top of the world" and you are boiling inside! When you communicate without hiding anything inside you, with an open and innocent mind, only from this level will you acquire the capability of receiving blessings.

Now, why are we not honest in this way? That is because we are not communicating with ourselves. We are not living with the real truth in us. We are under the illusion that we may get something in this world of objects. The most common comment that people make often is that politicians are not honest. Why are not many politicians honest? That is because their mind is only outward bound. They are always calculating and keeping watch of how much and what they can loot. If they want to loot people then it is not possible to be honest. Why? This is because they are dependent on somebody else. If you have to depend on somebody, then depend only on the divine power. The powerful God is the strength of the powerless.

It is not that we always obtain whatever we wish. Many a times, our desires will not be fulfilled. There are many times when we regret our desires and wonder why we ever wished for them. Isn't it? You desire something and then you regret as to why you desired it. We live under the illusion that we will live happily when we obtain all objects of our

desire. You should keep observing your desires. Only then you will know whether you will really derive happiness from your desire or if you will land in more trouble because of the desires.

It is said that, "Daivadheenam Jagat Sarvam, Mantradheenam tu daivatam" which means that the whole creation is under the control of Gods and the Gods are under the spell of mantras. All that you are seeing in this gross world is just a reflection arising from the subtle world. The one who works in the subtle world is known as Devatha or God.

Surrender to the Gods in the subtle plane. This is known as "Ishwara Pranidhaana". God does not mean that you simply visit a temple and break the coconut and come back after offering a prayer.

There is one honest corner in our consciousness. Just go and sit there. The moment you sit in that silent, honest corner of your consciousness, that very moment, you are tapping divine energy. "All the forms in the world reside in my consciousness," this experience will gradually begin to happen to you. You will realise that you are not only the body. You are that consciousness which is very vast and spread everywhere, on all sides. It is necessary to realise that you are not just the body. "Who am I? This body is only a small window that is all. I am really the Sun. When the Sun enters the window, does the window itself become the Sun? No. Sun only.

92. Guruji, do you worry?

Sri Sri: Yes! I worry why you worry! My worry is when you will stop worrying!

93. Guruji, what is the self?

Sri Sri: The "Self" is the sky - It includes everything. Don't sit and wait for some self to come down from somewhere and meet you! The moment you relax, and go deep into silence, you perceive the "Self", right here!

94. Guruji, do you dream?

Sri Sri: Guruji do I dream? I consider all this a dream! It's nothing more than a dream! Isn't it? Just wake up and see! All that has happened till this moment, are they more than dreams?

You went to school, you went to college, you caught a bus, you rode a bicycle, you did this, and you did that. Wake up and see, does any of it (till this moment) exist now? Now! It's all like a dream and this could be a dream too! Are you sure this is not a dream?

95. How can we control and conquer negative thoughts?

Sri Sri: Just stop this effort! Don't try to control - Just surrender.

You cannot control negative thoughts. I tell you, it's impossible! You cannot do certain things in a direct way. It is impossible to do them through direct means. You have to adopt indirect means. Then without your own knowledge, you will see that no negative thoughts even appear in front of you! Do your practice-do meditation, breathing techniques, exercise; eat good food and read- all this will help.

The 'Yoga Vasishtha' is one book that you can read. It contains wonderful knowledge about consciousness. Just give it a gentle reading.

If you feel there are negative thoughts, accept those thoughts.

"Negative thoughts are coming... Okay! Come! Please come and conquer me!" Be there, ready to be conquered and you'll see the negative thoughts just fly away.

96. How come you are always so happy? How does someone achieve this state of happiness?

Sri Sri: First, know that it is possible for you to also be this way! Second, go deeper into knowledge".

You know, there are a few books – "Celebrating Silence" or "An Intimate Note to the Sincere Seeker" series. Read one or all these books! You will get answer to many of your questions.

Take the Art of Living; spend time on learning Pranayams and Sudarshan Kriya. They will be useful to you. Once you take the time off and do it, it's so nice. It's such a beautiful thing to do!

You will understand how your own breath can bring so much change in you. You will understand how your own breath can bring you so much joy, peace and love.

97. Is the true nature of universe, pain and suffering? If it is not, why do we constantly struggle to free ourselves from pain and suffering? Please explain.

Sri Sri: It is natural. You know, it's like asking, "Why does water flow downwards?" Why does water flow downwards?" because it's natural! Why does a flame rise up? It does so because that is its nature.

Similarly, to want to be free from suffering is the nature of suffering! If you start to enjoy

suffering, then it's no suffering! If you don't want to be free from suffering, I tell you, it's not suffering at all!

Suffering means that which is not palatable to life-where the mind or life wants to be free from it, that's why it is called suffering.

Now don't be in a hurry to be free from it! Go a little slow. You know it's like wanting to relax, quickly! "I want to relax immediately! I want to relax now! Is this possible? No! The faster you want to get relaxed, the longer it will take.

So accepting, having faith and confidence that this suffering will pass, will help you overcome it quicker than being in a hurry to get rid of it!

98. Who is your inspiration?

Sri Sri: There are two books you can read to find an answer to this. One is 'Guru of Joy' and the other is 'Walking the Path'. I would say my inspiration is every child. I want to see everyone to be like a child. Of course, I must say my mother was a great force. She was always concerned that I had to do better. Anything I did, she would say that you had to do better. So, she was pushing me all the while.

99. What is the difference between the Spiritual Master and the Divine?

Sri Sri: There is no difference between the Master, the Self and the Divine. The Master can be seen, that is all. The Master is not the individual; He is the light, the consciousness.

100. Guruji, how come you radiate so much peace and serene beauty?

Sri Sri: Because you are beautiful too, that's why I appear peaceful to you. If you were not beautiful then you would know nothing about my beauty. Whatever quality you have, only that gets projected onto the world outside. So, what you see in me, take that as your own. If you don't feel beautiful, become beautiful. What is stopping you? Become that.

101. Everyone comes to you with their problems. Do you have any problems of your own?

Sri Sri: I have no troubles. That is why I can take away yours. If the doctor is sick, then can he heal you? Since I have no problems, you have come to me.

102. Please explain the meaning of Sat Chitananda?

Sri Sri: Sat is "that exists". Chit is "that knows". Ananda is "bliss".

103. Guruji, you are so beautiful, so serene that I can't move my eyes from you? Who are you?

Sri Sri: First ask yourself, 'Who am I?' and when you get this answer you will also know who I am anyhow, look within yourself, you are no less! Jaisa drishti, waisa srithiti. Jaisa nazar waisa nazaare, nazariya. As is the vision, so is the world. Only a jeweler can know a jewel. Only the one who is beautiful can recognize beauty. Only those who are lovable will recognize love not everyone.

104. Guruji, come what may I am not able to let go of my desires. I am so obsessed and passionate about them that I fear that if I let go of them, what will my life be?

Sri Sri: You should know when you let go the best will come to you. Don't be afraid and if it is not possible then never mind, hold on to it, but relax!

105. Jai Gurudev, you are so attractive, is this the bondage in my path? If I get stuck in your form what should I do to see beyond the form?

Sri Sri: So that you get detached from everything else - and then this will also automatically dissolve. You will see me more, much different than the form.

106. I wish to spend some time with you, sit with you and talk. I want to travel with you. What should I do?

Sri Sri: Fulfill those desires, which you can fulfill, and surrender those which you can surrender. Fulfillment of any desire requires effort and time. When you surrender, your desires automatically get fulfilled. Some desires are fulfilled after desiring for long time and some are not fulfilled even then. Sometimes you find it good later on that some of your desires were not fulfilled. Have this faith that Divine knows what is best for you. Neither criticize desires nor get swayed with the desires. Is it ok? This is the middle path. As you become more aware, everything else automatically starts becoming peaceful.

107. Why are there so many hurdles at every stage on the spiritual path?

Sri Sri: No No No its not hurdles, it is making your path more interesting. Its like flowing water, little pebbles create beautiful sound and sight, making it all the more beautiful.

There are no obstacles in this path, just a fun in the path. Move over it, don't get stuck.

108. Dear Guruji, are there many other planets where there are many other Guruji or are you the only Guruji of the universe?

Sri Sri: Yes, why do you want to worry about other planets now? I think I am enough for you to handle.

109. Jai Gurudev. Is there God, how to believe it?

Sri Sri: The cars are moving, do you see cars going in the street? Yes, but is somebody driving inside or are they moving on their own? There is a driver right, but you don't see the driver all the time when the cars are moving, right?

110. If we are all God, then why do we have so many Gods and Goddesses?

Sri Sri: The sun's light is one, yet when it goes through a prism, seven colors come up. All gods and goddesses are part of one truth. One Supreme Self is referred to as Devi, Shiva, Ganesh, and Kartikaya. Lord Krishna says rudranam shankaraschasmī, of rudras, I am Shankara, I am the Moon, the Sun, I am Shiva, I am Ganga river, I am everything.

111. Why am I so crazy to be here?

Sri Sri: Because I am also like that. Only a rich can make others also rich. Only a liberated one can bring freedom to others. Only a devotee can evoke devotion in others. A person in love with the Divine makes others also like that. Whatever is there within you that is what others receive and that is what you perceive in others.

112. I first time saw you yesterday, but I didn't feel you are a stranger?

Sri Sri: I have never felt, meeting anyone, as if I am meeting a stranger. The way your feelings are, you perceive the same. Any person you meet is only your reflection.

113. How do you initiate your disciples? Do you choose your disciples?

Sri Sri: Don't limit our relationship. Let love be love, don't give it a name. For a master, no disciples exist. But for a disciple, the Master exists. See, if you do the Sudarshan Kriya, you are initiated.

114. What is the most effective way to deal with the obsessive thoughts?

Sri Sri: Just embrace them. The more you try to push them away the more they come. When they come just give them a big hug and they will disappear. Another way is to put a stick in the fire and watch that's how your thought is burning away and also watch the river and as the current of water passes by the thoughts also passes by. Many people go up on the top of bridge and want to commit suicide but when they see water they change their mind. Obsessive thoughts can be over come by these means. Best is pranayam meditation and knowledge. Just wake up and see this is all just a dream.

115. Who are you? Are you God? Why are you a Guru?

Sri Sri: Why am I a guru? It is just by accident. I just started to guide people and people started calling me guru. Simple things like driving you need a coach don't you think one need a coach to deal with an unknown realm of consciousness. If you ask me you are god then I would say yes and you too are god. Love is god. The whole universe is made up of a vibration called love. That's what I am and that's what you are.

In India we say mother is the first god and then the teacher at end then the guest. So god is not a separate entity seeing somewhere in the heaven. This concept of God has given rise to atheism. Understand god as a presence, love, and universe. Anyone who can deny love from existence? Then they don't know. So first you should know what God is? God is not a person with hands and legs sitting somewhere in the heaven. No.

The concept of God has divided people in sects and religions. We should always think scientifically. That's why you see god in the tree, rivers, nature in the directions present in mountains and rivers. This is what the ancient Vedic system also says. How God is present in the creation like oil is in the sesame seed. Seek god everywhere and guru is one who helps you to find god in your self and everyone.

116. You often talk about multiple realities. Talk about angel's guardians etc?

Sri Sri: As I said the world is of multiple layers. On the one layer everything is made up of same things. But then when you come down to periodic table then its different there are many elements.

All these angels' guardians are classical chemistry. Similarly this entire hall is made of wood but door are not ceiling and ceiling is not floor. It might be very contradictory when you listen to it they are different. This is what many people miss. That's why this creation is very mysterious and very complex. Leaving the misery is spirituality. Understanding them is science and they go hand in hand. You can listen to katho Upanishad and kena Upanishad for more details.

117. The most important people in my life after you is not talking to me what do to. He also does not like me coming here.

Sri Sri: Have patience you be nice to them and let them be. You know sometimes people are scared that your love for them might be reduced so give them that confidence that you like them and you love them most.

118. What really is a mind without thinking?

Sri Sri: It's nothing. Bundle of thinking is mind.

119. How to get out of inertia when you are already in inertia?

Sri Sri: When you are in inertia fear can take you out. Like you are lying down and someone says that your house is on fire then you will jump out of the bed and run. Fear can take you out or greed. Someone tell you that look someone is outside to give you a million dollar. Would you say ask him to come tomorrow? Will you say that? Haan a saint can. greed/temptation. Third is someone who you love dearly and they have sent a letter or your phone ring and you will just grab the phone and talk. So love fear and greed are 3 things that can move you out of inertia. These 3 things can pull one out of any bad habits.

120. What about meat industry?

Sri Sri: Meat industry is outdated now. People have started understanding our whole systems are made up for vegetarians. The way the animals are tortured for the little food you need, you won't touch them. As we all have that sensibility. Once you see how much torture animal goes you will abstain from it.

121. We learn about yoga breathing and other things from Hindu religion. What about learning from other religions?

Sri Sri: Listen these practices do not subscribe to a religion. Hinduism is not a religion it's a way of life. If you go to roots of religions then you will find things to learn. Unfortunately most religions are associating with symbols power etc. Prayer is in all religions silence is fasting is. There are 33 practices that are common to Christianity and Hinduism. People say I accept you're all the postures but I can't say Om. Why can't you say? You can say all bad words but not Om.

You can say Apple why can't you say Om. A sound makes you drop your religion? Is your faith in religion so weak? That shows how weak we are. This is wrong. Om is like the

signature of yoga part of relations. You do not go to apple store and say I want your computer but I don't want your Apple symbol please remove and that also bitten Apple. Can you call the iphone company and say remove the iphone you put my phone on it... (Laughs)

122. Though you talked about the conflict of Gaza yesterday do you see peace coming in?

Sri Sri: The Middle East problem is humongous. There is virtually no trust left between the two parties. It will take a lot of effort to built bridges and re-establish the trust. We are just doing a drop in the ocean. AOL is doing work in this direction. Some place we have found success. There are vested interest and arms dealer and factories are involved. They would want this happen. We're there is economic interest and power and other motives are involved then it becomes more complex. We are not giving up on it we will keep working.

123. Why bother with helping other when you can choose infinite bliss?

Sri Sri: If you have found bliss you can't but share it and what's the point of finding it and not sharing it. What's the point of earning money and not sharing it? Similarly when you gain knowledge you share it. When you are happy you don't say leave me alone I am happy. Laughs...

124. Why someone has sometimes feelings with same sex. Why is it a big tabbu?

Sri Sri: I think it's no longer a taboo it was in past century. Each one is made up of both mother and father. There are male and female energies you are made up of. Sometimes one dominates and sometimes other dominates. People's preferences change later on. It is better not to label for lifetime because it is just a display of energy inside you and I want you to rise above the identification of body.

Your body has gender but consciousness does it have any gender. Realize you are scintillating light. You are not just pieces of bones and blood. You are light. When you get this understanding then this emotional turbulence you are free from them. You get better understanding of yourself. So there are so many people who discover their sexually and are so upset and guilty. They become assertive and start hating society. We should get over these extreme reactive tendencies and realize we are joy, light, and consciousness. People understand now. It's not a disease as it was thought sometime back today. Its just energy that plays that role.

125. Some question about 'pleasure seeking'.

Sri Sri: Pleasure seeking is focused only to your self. I should be comfortable. This is pleasure seeking. You don't care for others. Just do what gives you pleasure and mind of logic reasoning and only focused on my me, my me. That will definite put through lot of problems.

126. I am struggling with transition in my business, parent & spouse. How do I do it more peacefully?

Sri Sri: More pranayam and more meditation.

127. Sometimes I feel like staying in ashram and lead a normal life.

Sri Sri: Don't leave the normal life live the normal life. I want to make the whole world an ashram. You can make your own home your ashram. Give people some knowledge and food. If you do this then every home is an ashram. Make your home as light house of knowledge and love. You don't have to leave the world and come here and live here if you have responsibilities. But you are most welcome to come and do seva. If you want to be in ashram to contribute then it's okay but not to just to become lazy. If you have that much dedication then this is the place for you.

128. You talk of dropping feverish. I see a lot of your devotees acting feverish. Am I less of a devotee if I be with nature and not run behind you?

Sri Sri: It's okay. I don't know why people run behind me. It's still better here. In India People Pull My Legs. They bang their head on my feet. When I walk I have to see behind who is doing what. I could not figure out why people are like that. I can write book for whatever I have to do in every country. Laughs! You tell me if you have any ideas I am running out of them.

129. What is the meaning of the opening of the third eye and what do I feel when I experience this happening? Why is the opening of the third eye associated with the destruction of desires?

Sri Sri: It is intuition; don't think there is an eye opening like this and something is popping up from your head. You get a bump or a hole in your forehead, no!

You know you close your eyes still you feel some light; you may see or you may feel, it can be both ways.

If someone says I am going to open your third eye and this and that, just don't go into those things. I tell you, definitely not, it is simply hoax because I have seen so many people claiming to open the third eye and nothing happens really, people get a headache, an incurable headaches many times and you get into problems. You know many such cases come to us for repair, so if someone says I want to open your third eye tell them, thank you very much, I am happy with two eyes.

The deeper you go in meditation your intuitive ability develops.

You know the third eye is associated with alertness and awareness. When you are alert, awake, more into knowledge then naturally the energy has moved from the lowest chakra to the highest.

The lower things no more interest you. You know when you are very alert and awake the sexual energy has transformed itself into a different quality of consciousness. The sexual energy is when the back portion of our brain, our head is activated.

Alertness, perception and awareness happen when the front portion of the brain is activated; the pituitary and pineal glands are getting activated. In the brain also they are on the opposite sides of each other.

So it is myth logically said when the third eye opens then the gross desires simply evaporate, not that it is bad but they simply don't make much sense anymore.

That is why the intellectuals and the highly spiritual oriented practitioners always put something on the forehead, some sandal wood paste because they are focusing; doing some yoga and meditation so they put some sandal wood to cool the forehead, to cool it a little bit.

When the frontal lobe of the brain becomes more active, more alert, then thinking, intellectual work, creativity, memory they are all enhanced because all of these things are in the frontal lobe of the brain and sensory pleasures are all at the back of the brain.

130. I feel guilty whenever I make a mistake. How do I correct my mistake?

Sri Sri: Wanting to correct a mistake brings doer ship and doer ship is the foundation for mistakes. Often, those who are trying to correct mistakes get caught up in more mistakes. Those who recognize their mistakes are free from them.

Often, when one acknowledges a mistake, one tries to justify it, without taking responsibility for it and sometimes one accepts that one made a mistake and starts justifying it or feeling guilty about it. Mistakes get dropped when one is troubled by ones conscience (viveka) or grief.

There may be flaws in any action, any situation or any person. Treat a flaw as you would treat a flower. Just as a flower has to wither away after sometime, so does a flaw.

131. Can you please guide me how to be a better person?

Sri Sri: Who said you are bad. You are good and you are getting better day-by-day. You are doing just the right thing here to become better.

132. From what I understand is that on the spiritual path we need to drop egos. But I see you pumping a lot of egos especially certain egos. Please explain the irony?

Sri Sri: I have my own ways. Yeah. There are 2 ways. One is to tell someone you are useless. Many times it doesn't work. Another way is to tell you are beautiful you are great. You invoke greatness through praising. Praising is divine quality. On this path your words get so much power that if you tell someone you are dirty then they become like that.

I remember that in old days I used to tell a man in family that you are so generous. One day his wife gathered the courage to ask me why you tell my husband generous, as he is so stingy that he doesn't buy 2 ice creams for my kids. He says share. He doesn't spend for anything good. I told her I know that's why I am telling him he is generous. If you tell somebody then they will become like that.

133. Could you please talk about manu and if he is still walking on the planet?

Sri Sri: Manu was one of the Kings in the past. But he has written the rule of the society at that time. One word he said that when a woman is a child her father takes care when she is young the husband takes care and when old her children take care. So she does not qualify of independence. This is one thing he has said which is not the right thing but at that time of society may be that was right. One does not have to agree to everything. Don't latch on to one thing.

134. What do you think of channeling?

Sri Sri: Stay away from it. You are far above. Channeling is some spirit that comes into someone's body and gives some info but it's not so true every time. You should not be depended on this. Often people channel on the lowest spirit. These things are not good for your own energy. Often these people are sick. It is not advisable to take help from these people. Just for fun if you want you may so but I would not advise. You know people get stuck and don't find liberation.

Once a lady from France had came to India, young lady and very good seeker. She went to once a channel person. He said you know I see there is one person in white dress protecting you so I can't reply you anything. So she thought that may be she is in AOL so it is so. She left all her practices and went into this. She got married. Got a son and then her husband was a drug addict and she got into drugs and her whole life became so miserable.

It's even then that the Art of Living people took her out of her situation and helps her out. After 6 years she came and she was completely in wreck. So many of the slower spirit can try to shift you from your path. Keep them away from an arms length. Sometime they say some Saint is coming Haan, if someone is so hollow and empty then it might be okay but mostly people do it for money. Don't need to be scared about it but at the same time no point in getting into the spirit world.

135. Please say something about the significance of dreams. Sometimes when I pray of you, you appear in my dreams.

Sri Sri: Dreams are dreams many dimensions of life.

136. How can one devote to spiritual growth while financially struggling?

Sri Sri: You do not have to devote so much time. Once a year etc is good enough. You don't have to go one after another and everyday you do some practice. Think I would not do my breakfast till I do bhastrika. Be in touch with knowledge. While Driving listen to knowledge while going to bed listen to some knowledge. Just do these things.

137. What is the best way to overcome prejudice?

Sri Sri: Once you know you have prejudice you have already overcome and when you are already out of it why to worry. Haan for others it's only through knowledge. Only way to come out through. Don't think only rich people have ego. Poor people have worst ego. As they judge people. They become angry on those for no such reason. There are such people in India there are some people who take pride in poverty. You know so and so wear only slippers everywhere. That doesn't qualify you to be a capable person.

If someone has only 2 t-shirts that doesn't make you a big saint. As though it is a big pride. You take pride in poverty; it is difficult to get rid of that pride. That arrogance of poverty and they don't achieve anything. If you go to kumbh mela you would see someone standing on one leg for years. I think it's crazy. God has given you two legs and people think look so great he has been standing like this for so many years. I tell you these are those types of egos, look at their face. This is not an iota of happiness. You don't even get a drop of joy and they call themselves holy men. I don't know what holiness they have?

Same in all traditions they have this.

In catholic's they take vow of poverty and they are the richest in this planet. It's your attitude that makes it good or bad. You know. Okay one should not be greedy. Earn money judiciously and have trusted whatever you need you will get in your life.

138. How to get rid of I or me that keeps coming up?

Sri Sri: Don't try to get rid of it. That's the biggest problem.

139. Why do I go on and off in my practice? I hear that other people do this also.

Sri Sri: Well this is natural. When it is fruits on the tree then you enjoy fruits and forget to water and then when it becomes dry then you start watering. But then you become intelligent you need to make these good practice part of your life. Like brushing your teeth. Dental hygiene. This is mental hygiene

140. I am too much attached to the sense of taste I overeat and I suffer.

Sri Sri: Eat slowly. Chew 32 times. Or one day just take only salad. Put lettuce in your mouth and eat like a cow (Laughs) you will discover something fantastic. You know elephant eats 20 hours and sleeps only one hour. May be that elephant DNA is more in you and tomorrow if you assume elephant size also then nobody to be blamed. Be ready for it ready to discard your clothes. See if your chair is big enough.

141. How can you get nice to people who are mean to you?

Sri Sri: It is impossible for anyone to be always mean to you. If they are then give them a prize. You will find that 90% of the time they are nice and may be 10% mean. Have you been mean to someone forever? You be mean to some one for a month. See what happens you cannot.

You need to establish better communications. No complaints no explanations. Don't ask for explanation. No post mortem and accusing someone you don't do this and if you put the pressure for them to prove their love then how much burden it are for them. Never put such burden on anyone. Take it for granted. You have to kindle love in everybody.

If you can't then it's not their fault totally. If you feel lonely. You will continue to feel lonely in spite of everything. You know what its good luck you are not satisfied with everything outside and you are looking for something more. Its good fortune that they are lonely as

they are able to take another journey.

The divinity has given you everything and is waiting to receive you. That is when you can go deep into meditation. Universe wants to embrace you. The air, water, the sky in all forms divine is dealing with you. As birds chirping, Flowers are blossoming, Rivers flowing. Nature is calling for you to rise to some level.

You are here to spread joy. The more you ask for it the less you will get. The more you give the more you receive it. Got it. Demanding love destroys love. Like sitting on the branch and cutting it. Best is to give love around you. Not demand anything. If you have to demand then demand from me. Demand from the divinity. You can demand anything from the master. Because you don't know where is God? So you can demand and have patience. Untimely things if children demand then mother won't give. Nature also gives you when you need it at the right time.

Don't go and ask everybody and demand love and affections and care. These are childish. Put them all. Got it. Would you like to be with a partner who complains all the time? You would like to spend time with someone who uplifts you. I am not saying you be goody goody. If you have to take stick then take it. Once in while such dose is okay to put them back on track. What do you say? Don't fight with anger. It's easy to fight with anger. Fight with happiness and enthusiasm and smile. Be a giver of love not a beggar. This is a step in spirituality. First step I would say.

142. What makes you special?

Sri Sri: I am not special. May be I am a bit crazy bit not special. (Laughs)

143. I have observed that all your devotees are so sweet in ashram. But outside they change. Please design a course to make more 'Gurujis'.

Sri Sri: Don't judge others. You don't know what they are going through.

144. Make me your disciple and make me free from maya.

Sri Sri: You want to be student forever. One saint came and said that one who will learn stays and one who does not leave.

145. Gurudev, is it destiny or our actions that decides our future? I have heard many times that whatever is going to happen is already pre-decided. Is it true? If that is so, then we should not be made responsible for our good and bad actions. I have been confused about all this

for a very long time. Please help me understand this.

Sri Sri: This is a very deep subject. If everything was already predestined, then what is the need to do anything? Then doing Sadhana, chanting mantras or offering worship to God would all be useless activities.

See, when it comes to animals and other living creatures, then everything is indeed pre-decided (by Nature). But in the case of human beings, some things are predestined by destiny, but there is some freedom of choice too. You are gifted with Viveka (discretion) to distinguish between right and wrong.

See, birds and animals do not acquire the fruits (merits or sins) of their actions, since all their actions and activities are programmed in their DNA itself. But in the case of human beings, you have the freedom to choose how to act, and you also have the ability to distinguish one thing from another. So you can change the way things happen as per your wish that is why human life is well suited for attaining liberation.

So, despite things being predestined in life, you have the ability and free choice to either endure what happens, or change whatever happens in life. Human life is a mixture of things that are predestined, and free will.

146. What is nothingness filled with?

Sri Sri: Filled with energy. Again quantum physics. Dark matter dark energy. Sun is round because energy is pushing sun to be round. Like an air bubble in water. Because the pressure of water keeping bubble round. In the same way sun is round because the energy around the sun is one million times the sun. So the space we hunk is empty is not empty. All is filled with energy.

Yoga speaks about the 5th element - Space chidakash. One is an approach from materialist. Another is an approach from consciousness. Spirituality is only an extended science.

147. Do you think martial arts can play a role in the path of enlightenment?

Sri Sri: Yes it brings strength in body, discipline in mind, sharpens intellect and channelizes the energy and emotions.

148. How can I help you Guruji?

Sri Sri: I would leave this to you. Time to time it will come and change. These questions are like path.

149. Why worthlessness and helplessness is so uncomfortable. How to shed this? Why is there a constant run to create importance?

Sri Sri: You know consciousness is very intelligent and it would have taken you away if you were worthless. So everyone has some worth. Keep increasing your scope of work little bit every time.

150. Dear Guruji while I was meditating with you my pain is totally gone. Not only for a while. How do you do that? How do you know?

Sri Sri: Ya I leave you to wonder about it. See pain is not just in the body. It's not in the mind. It's there where mind and body both meet. Because when you get injection you don't feel pain. Sometimes there is nothing in the body but you feel pain. So it can't be on body or only mind. Meditation takes you up and above. That's why Guru is called the medicine of worldly diseases. He is the doctor and the medicine. (Everyone claps)

151. Guruji which Indian scripture is equivalent to Quran.

Sri Sri: It's difficult to say that as bed as are the Source. Upanishads and Geeta can be considered. But it's still difficult to say that. Bhagwat Geeta is 5200 years old. But this tradition is much more ancient. Like vedas. But they can't be understood easily. Upanishads and vedas are considered the authority.

152. Life has become so fast paced I find it difficult to stay centered.

Sri Sri: It's good. Life is fast you cannot hold on to anything. It doesn't give you time to brood over the past.

153. Why the divine always depicted as masculine.

Sri Sri: No it's depicted as both.

154. Once you said that once we die there is guru to take you other side. What happens to other loved once? Do they come back?

Sri Sri: You have already answered. They come back. They go with their return ticket. Short trip to Florida and back. (Laughs)

155. How come Krishna of gopies be the same as krishna of Geeta. Both are so different things?

Sri Sri: Krishna was very young when he had gopies around. It was not a physical relationship. It was from heart. He stole everyone's mind. That's why he is called chitta chora. Even saints could not stay and would run after him. All these gopies stories happened between 1 to 14 years of age. It's not like flirting or that type of story.

156. I have wanted to speak with you but every time I get opportunity I get tongue tied?

Sri Sri: My luck. (Everyone laughs) just joking.

157. If you're upset, angry, depressed, hateful, or jealous; any of these negative emotions, it simply means that you are lacking energy (prana), and you have moved away from the center.

This is a very simple equation: If you're upset then you lack prana, that's it. When energy is there, then there is no question of getting depressed or upset. There is no question of saying, 'Oh, everything is bad. The world is hopeless'.

When there is energy, it gives you enthusiasm, and then you say, 'If the world is hopeless it gives me an opportunity to do something about it. Improve the world', because that energy uplifts your spirit and uplifts everybody's spirit as well.

It is like making a home of sand. You make a home of sand 10 times and it collapses, but then the next minute you're ready to make it again. You remain unmindful of whatever has happened before, that indicates prana.

158. Sometimes people ask things from me and I don't want to say no. Is there a way I convert all the no to yes?

Sri Sri: No. you should say 'no' also. Some people take your advantage so you need to say 'no' to make them grow. Like with children, you can't say yes every time. You will be a very bad mother. Discipline can be brought by saying no. We must.

In India you go in car in Delhi, Mumbai there are people coming and begging. Initially I could not say no but later I realised that I am making them treading a wrong path. Help homeless get job instead of giving them food. Once is okay but not on regular basis. It appears very cruel but not for them as you are making them dependent and weak. If there are sick, children, old people then its fine. But if they are capable of working then we should not make them beggars.

In the scriptures it is said that even compassion should be accompanied with wisdom. Is compassion going to be good for them or not. Real compassion is giving good word of advise not just charity. Some people take advantage by taking money, they cheat so many. You should not be a party to it. But if someone is really in need then help. You should not entertain their laziness.

159. Ego and Self from a Different Angle

Ego is that something, which has two aspects – the positive and the negative. The creativity in you – are the results of ego. At the same time, when you break down communication, when you isolate yourself, when you're in tears, when you're stressed – that is also ego. We do not know about the ego, and so we don't pay much attention to it. But just 2-3 facts, awareness of how ego works!

The self – the basis of life! You can call it the spirit, the soul, consciousness, the source of the mind – anything. It is that something, which doesn't change in one's whole life. After discovering about all these levels, what is left is the Self.

Everything is changing, isn't it? Do you notice this?

Just look at yourself in the mirror and then look at your picture taken a few months or a few years ago. Isn't there a big difference?

Your body is changing, your thoughts are changing, the mind is changing, emotions are changing, and situations are changing... But still you feel there is something in me which is not changing. So that something, which is the basis of all change, that something through which, you notice the change is the self – the atma, the spirit. It is the most amazing aspect of our lives. Just a glimpse of it, a dip into your spirit energizes our whole system – and that is what meditation is.

Spirituality is the skill of nurturing, purifying and blossoming one's all levels of existence.

160. How to overcome the fear of losing my loved ones?

Sri Sri: See, if you don't have much to do, and you have a lot of free time then fear will come to you in some or the other form. The fear of losing a loved one, or the fear of catching a disease, of the fear of dying; many different fears can take over you. The antidote for fear is love and service.

If you keep yourself busy in doing some service, where is the time to think about anything? It is the same energy, which manifests as fear, hatred or love. So if you channel the energy towards love, then it will not manifest as fear or hatred. So, keeping busy, being active in

doing some selfless service will help.

161. Give me all your problems and keep smiling and I will tell you all will be well. Little time it may take but be strong in your faith in your connection, things will move!

162. How can I get purer? Even though I am doing Sadhana, Satsang and Seva, I do not feel very pure. When I see people who are arrogant, rude and proud, especially Art of Living people, I feel very sad. How do I get rid of this?

Sri Sri: You are saying two things. One you are saying that others are arrogant, others are not okay; and the other thing you are saying is you are not okay. This is just mirroring; you are mirroring in both sides.

I would say if you feel that you are impure, pranayama and proper food will help. If you still feel that you are not okay then just go on a fruit and vegetable diet for a couple of days and just sing and chant. When you are sitting in satsang and singing how can you say that you are impure? There is no way. Don't you feel when you are sitting in satsang that how much ever impurity you might have felt in the mind, it all got lifted up?

How many of you feel that way? (Many raise their hands). See!

'Nahi Jnanena sadrusham pavitram iha vidyate. Tat swayam yoga samsiddhaha kalen atmani vindathi'. (Srimad Bhagavad Gita chapter 4, verse number 38)

The old saying is – there is nothing better than knowledge which can purify your mind, your soul and your spirit. Knowledge purifies.

Sit and listen to Ashtavakra Gita for half an hour or 20 minutes; you will feel uplifted.

About your feeling that others are arrogant – it is good that these people have come to me, here, in The Art of Living. I feel happy about it and I have patience, you also keep patience. I patiently keep waiting. Out there in the world they would've created problems and so much trouble to so many. At least here they are in less difficulty, and they are giving you an exercise to practice the first principle - accept people as they are.

Also, I would like you to know that The Art of Living people are not a special species from somewhere, they are normal people in the world and they have all the traits of the people in the world. They are not different.

Yes, your expectations from The Art of Living people is more because you think they are soaked in knowledge, they are in love, they serve people. So your expectations are much higher because you see that they are very privileged. That is correct! But you start from

yourself first, you are so privileged, you have the patience to accept everybody.

People ask me questions, 'Why have you made such people teachers who are so arrogant, who are so angry', and so on.

I tell them that I need all specimens and all species; all types of people. I carry them along and everybody is comfortable with me, and I am comfortable with everybody. I have patience to see them grow. That is how The Art of Living has grown.

If I was looking for perfection, I tell you, we won't be here today. We would not be sitting here today. I would be somewhere else and you would be somewhere else. We need to have patience.

It is like, in a school, you cannot expect all the kids to be in one class and it is not that one class is superior to other class. It is not as if the nursery kids are superior to the primary kids. There is no superiority, it is just the way they are. It is just the time and pace they take to grow from one class to another, from one level to another. People keep growing, and we need to have patience and I tell you, it tests your patience, and it is good.

163. Just know that you are a diamond - you are pure! You are very precious. Sometimes a diamond may have fallen into the garbage bin. Down in the dump, you are feeling low. Full of guilt and ideas of sin etc. But know that you are much bigger than your actions, much bigger than your situations and circumstances.

For the diamond to become clear again - it just needs a little water - that's all! Then it shines brightly again. You are already pure and clean - just a little wash: practice / sadhana - and you're back to your true self, your unbounded nature.

Have that sense of purity - and celebrate! You don't need a reason to celebrate - joy and happiness that is your very nature. When you are clear and pure - your true nature shines forth! Celebration happens from that silence, from the depth of your being!

164. Guruji, do you have any goals?

Sri Sri: I just inspire the people to set their goals.

165. Guruji, you are our role model!

Sri Sri: But I model all your roles.

166. Guruji, what makes ordinary man extraordinary?

Sri Sri: Extra ordinary man always thinks they are ordinary.

167. Guruji, please show me the path.

Sri Sri: Why? Why shall I show you the path? I am not irresponsible. I will take you to your goal. It's my habit.

It's the age of aeroplanes and you are talking in terms of bullock carts. You have sat in a plane and your flight has taken off. Now, this plane will take you to your destination. You need not ask for the path.

168. Guruji, you are so wonderful, when can I become like you?

Sri Sri: First stop attempting to become like me. Know that I am you.

169. Guruji, how to fight circumstances?

Sri Sri: Why do you want to fight? Accept it.

170. Guruji, we love you.

Sri Sri: You do not have any choice! Neither do I.

171. Guruji, I have turned adult yesterday, any advice?

Sri Sri: Just stay there, Just like me, I am a teenager who refuses to grow.

172. Guruji, any advice on raising children?

Sri Sri: I have no experience in the matter. I do the job of making adults into children.

173. Guruji, what is the difference between Sukh (happiness) and Ananda (bliss)?

Sri Sri: Sukh can be followed by Dukh, but Ananda is followed by Ananda only.

174. Guruji, can we have multiple Gurus?

Sri Sri: One Guru is more than enough to handle, why you want to have multiple Gurus.

175. Guruji, don't you get tired of wearing white all the time?

Sri Sri: No, because I am colorful myself! Isn't it?

176. Guruji, how to maintain always happy?

Sri Sri: First drop 'Always'. Today we are happy. Tomorrow, we will see tomorrow.

177. Guruji, after seeing you. I don't feel like going to temples to worship the idols.

Sri Sri: It is okay. Initially, we need forms to worship and gradually we moves towards worshipping the formless. The divine is present everywhere.

178. Guruji, why do we run behind you like the mice run behind the pipe piper?

Sri Sri: That's what I wonder too! (Looking behind him). Anyway, there is no one behind me all you are sitting in front of me. I keep everyone in front of me and push them forward! I am behind you.

179. Guruji, you travel round the globe all the time, which is the most beautiful place you have visited?

Sri Sri: In your heart.

180. Guruji, I love you the most, who do you, love?

Sri Sri: All of you.

181. Guruji, it is said that when we take one step towards the Guru, he takes ten towards us. If we take one step backwards, what does he do?

Sri Sri: Wait for you to take a step forward.

182. Guruji, if you and I are same. Please explain.

Sri Sri: The subtler one goes one finds unity. In physical level we are not same at all. We are all unique. Our thumb impressions are different. But on subtle level we are same. Because there is only one big life force. The whole universe is one organism. Your body has million organisms but you are one person. Similarly universe has many lives but the whole universe is one organism and it's called Brahman. Means the whole universe as a living entity. Not he or she. Like life force and electricity is not a he or she. Like that the whole universe is one life force. In that sense we are all same.

183. Please talk on the subject of divorce. When is it a good thing or is it to be avoided.

Sri Sri: I don't have any experience. Listen ask yourself have you put your 100% to make your marriage work. Have you done everything to please your partner and make him/her happy? Marriage means sacrifice. For the good of the other and the for the sake of family. I want this I want this will not make any marriage work. What we want, how we can bring happiness if you keep your attention on that only then marriage can be successful. So if you have given your 100% then also it doesn't work then.

One person after 70 years of marriage realised it's not working and we were never compatible. 'My dear' it appears like that. When you go through a bad phase then it appears everything is not right. If that were so then you would have not tolerated for 70 years there has to be something right. So when you realise after giving your 100% that it isn't working then on good understanding you can part.

184. The breath is so powerful. How does it connect with subtle?

Sri Sri: You are already connected. Breath only makes you realise. The outgoing mind is brought inside. Breath is that portico where you park the car.

185. Can you please discuss the link between quantum physics and yoga?

Sri Sri: Physics has discovered matter does not exist. All matter like table chair appears to exist but its just wave functions. What you see does not exist. One great scientist physicist, he said 4 years I studied particles to simply realise that it simply doesn't exist. Now when I talk to people they think I am talking buddist philosophy. Yoga speaks about the 5th element - Space chidakash. One is an approach from materialist. Another is an approach from consciousness. Spirituality is only an extended science.

186. Can you talk on out peer pressure and how to deal with it?

Sri Sri: You should learn to walk alone. Some times young people should learn to walk alone. Then you will be more centred and you will know things. Take a long walk all by your self. That will solidify your personality, because if you are surrounded by friends all the time but if out are trained to do your own running then you can walk by yourself.

Even when no one comes with you you walk by your self. In this way you can become a leader. Why you like the company of your peers because you want attention as it gives you energy. To get over peer pressure you need to stand up and walk alone.

187. I have always had thoughts of doing everything big spread out involve many people. Is it wrong to think big?

Sri Sri: No it's okay to think big but at the same time you should be practice also.

188. You impact love and knowledge around the world. Why is the the whole world not gifted equally?

Sri Sri: That's how it is. Some is left for you to teach.

189. What do you do when you love your work and you know you are good at it but still not successful?

Sri Sri: You are appreciating your work but the other all have to appreciate. See what more you can do to improve.

190. Can you please speak on the nature of Om why is it much used as a mantra?

Sri Sri: It is not used as a mantra. It can be chanted aloud. It can make you total recluse or introvert as a mantra. It is full energy mantra and is meant to chant Loud.

191. Since we surrender our botheration, pains and problems with you, are we running away from our responsibility?

Sri Sri: No. You should not. Have the balance. You know. You do your hundred percent and leave the rest. Yeah. It not running away it is sense of re assurance in you that things are going well and going to be well.

192. I am not sure what reason I was born for and what I am doing is right or not?

Sri Sri: At least you have this question. This very question is important and shows at least you are awake. Give a pat in your back. You are lucky. Keep doing practices. Take interest in knowledge and do seva.

193. Can you talk about kundilini yoga?

Sri Sri: I recommend you not to go into kundilini yoga. It is anyways coming up naturally. You have done sudarshan kriya shankti kriya. Many people go into kundilini yoga and loose their balance and get into such big problem.

There are some types of yoga that is not suitable for today's age. In ancient age they had time. Today they give you kundilini yoga and then give energy and then you go nuts. You do little bit this one and then some that one and then you are forced to do one year syllabus in one month. Too much energy goes then what happens. You get fused. It is important to grow gradually. We have everything in the course if you are having good meditation that means kundilini is already active. But these people force to make kundilini rise to and it.

194. I love you more than I ever could imagine. I divorced several years ago and I want that the love I have for you should be there in my next mate.

Sri Sri: We learn from our past mistakes and don't put a label in your mind that we will never be able to do this and that nothing you can have for ever. Everything comes for some time.

195. Is it okay to love and be with a married man?

Sri Sri: Suppose you were married and your husband is with someone would you like it. Put your self in the place of that other woman then you decide this. I won't tell you.

196. Why do we get bad breath? Is it because of some disease?

Sri Sri: Improper digestion. Something wrong with your stomach. Attend to your digestion. Do some cleaning. Then it should not come. Ask dieticians.

197. I have negative and anxious thoughts of people know. I know that's the false way to think but I can't apply to my life. I have been struggling.

Sri Sri: Listen now doesn't fight. Just accept and see what happens. Such thoughts come and you don't fight.

198. Even though I know what is good for me I am still attracted towards self destructive habits. Laziness etc.

Sri Sri: See when you label yourself I am lazy you justify yourself then you get licence for it. First you remove your labels and spit it off. You think you don't know who you are. When you don't know who you are then you get more chances to remove it. Take simple determinations and see that it follows through out the day. I remember when I used to walk from my home to school I would count all my steps so with full awareness. So just walk with awareness. So be determined. See within how many minutes I will do it. So take challenge for yourself and fulfil it. That is the way to increase your capacity. Okay.

199. I heard the other day your comment on the situation I in Gaza and Ukraine we are a middle class family and stay in Canada. Yet our standard of living has stopped increasing despite increasing revenues, my personal opinion is that the regular people were enjoying less freedom. The government are taking over more on us what do you think about it.

Sri Sri: Rules are essential in any society but it should not be too stifling. When you feel life is boredom that's when you should engage in all these activities. Day to day engage in some group activities. We are just caring for immediate families and us then we shrink and start getting upset at home.

200. I learn that planet Saturn affects majorly someone's life. How long does it lasts.

Sri Sri: Astrology is the science of understanding it is the science that talks about the connection microcosm and macrocosm. How far the planets are and have connection to the planet earth and to entire creation. The ancient people did know there is connection with the planets and body. Saturn is connected with legs and sesame seed and crow as a bird and blue sapphire stone.

Today with the entire powerful telescope we can find out how big the universe is. But ancient people knew it all. It's amazing. It's the science that is not being explored very well. If you are undergoing a particular Saturn period then it will affect you but it won't affect only in the bad way. If you have dispassion then it affects you less. Saturn is a very spiritual planet. If you are in the path then it will elevate your life. So that you can find the bigger wealth. Saturn can do good to us on the path if you are not then it will create problems so

that you can get on the path. He will give you inner wealth or outer wealth.

Saturn takes 30 years to take one circle around. It comes for 2 and half year in each sign. That's why people feel so desperate to come out. It can go to 3 to 5 years. In Indian it's called 'sade satti'. If it's lesser then they call it 'dhaiya'. It comes once in 30 years so 2 times in life. Second time it is not that bad. What is the help of astrology? If you know this then you turn spiritual and wait for the time to pass. It pulls you through the tough period. If you are already on the path then it can give you success. It gives indications. As there is always a grace element in it that can change anything anytime. Spirituality is step higher than this knowledge.

201. I have heard you talk about self-effort, but in my experience it's all a 'Happening'. Is this thought also a happening?

Sri Sri: Ya in one angle everything in general is happening.

202. The ashram garden is not doing well there are only 2 people there. Food isn't growing there. How can we tell people?

Sri Sri: All people in the ashram should spend few hours there. All n those who can come in the weekend should come. Next to German ashram there are a couple in eighties and how they maintain their garden entire day. It's very inspiring. We also have a peice of land next to them we need to learn from them.

203. I have a constant feeling that I am not doing that great. I feel envy when you love someone else.

Sri Sri: Nature of love is that you always feel you want to do more. When love is divining you feel ooh I have done enough. That's why frustration feels in. A mother feels she has not enough for the daughter.

204. Is it possible to repair trust in a relationship after a partner cheats?

Sri Sri: I have no experience of this. I can tell you suppose you were in that position and made a mistake unknowingly and if your partner does not forgives you then how will you feel and your partner is in your shoe and not forgiving you, would you fell okay? Or would you give your partner another chance.

Nobody willingly wants to cheat anyone. It's temptation to get more and more. Your soul does not stop till it finds the ocean of joy and that drives someone to do things that are not

ethical. You expect them to be an enlightened person. This is too much of an expectation from your side. That's why spirituality is so essential for someone to grow in integrity.

205. What would be the best way to stay connected with you while overcoming the organisational politics?

Sri Sri: Wherever there are people there is politics. Politics means what? "People", if you think there is politics then it appears even bigger. Not everyone likes everybody. Someone likes some. Not everybody vibes matches with everybody. Why you say politics because your vibes does not match with someone. You should simple know we are much beyond.

206. Why is it that when I am away from you I long for you and when I am near you there is still a longing for you?

Sri Sri: What ever it is.

207. Why are we here? Is there something we should be striving for everyday or long term?

Sri Sri: That's good question and be with this question.

208. Why do people say my guruji my master?

Sri Sri: Don't latch on to their words. The language has always my. You cannot speak without it. Let people say whatever they want to say. As long as there is a sense of belongingness and personal connection there is life. But why do you want to worry what other say. See their intentions and beyond their words.

209. What do you think of people who are divorced and are happy alone? Should they get married or not?

Sri Sri: There is no general reply for it. They can stay however they want but they should be happy.

210. Shravan: A month for Reflection & Celebration

"Shravan means 'to listen' in Sanskrit. It is the first step in integrating knowledge into our lives. We listen (Shravana), then we bring to our memory repeatedly (manana) and then the knowledge becomes integrated as a wealth into our life (nidhidhyasa).

This month is a time to listen to our elders, listen to wisdom, to be in knowledge. Parvati did puja to Shiva during this month. She did tapas in order to attain Shiva. This month is the time to go inward and meet the Shiva tattva (Shiva principle) within us.

Parvati is a manifestation of Shakti. Shakti means strength, power and energy. Shakti is the womb for all creation and is therefore expressed as the mother aspect of the Divine. Shakti is the seed for all dynamism, radiance, beauty, equanimity, peace and nourishment. Shakti is the life force.

There are five aspects of creation.

Asti – Is-ness

Bhati – Knowledge and Expression

Preeti – Love

Nama – Name

Rupa – Form

Matter has two aspects - Name and Form.

Consciousness has three aspects, Asti – it is, Bhati – it knows and expresses and Preeti – it is loving. Maya – ignorance or delusion is not being aware of the three aspects of the consciousness and getting caught up in the name and form.

Different functional aspects of this divine energy, Shakti, have different names and forms. The "I" (ee) in Shakti is energy. Without the "I", "Shiva" becomes "shava" which in Sanskrit means lifeless.

Shakti is dynamism expressed. The Shiva tattva is inexpressible. You can see the wind blowing, trees swaying, but you can't see stillness, which is the reference point for all movement. The dynamic expression is Shakti. The stillness and calmness is Shiva. Both are necessary. When dynamic expression is combined with stillness within, then there is creativity, positivity, and Sattva is generated.

Shakti is the moving force. Parvati is an ansha of Adi Shakti. With reference to Shiva, she is the ardhangi. She is the scintillating energy, the dynamic aspect of Shiva.

There was a time for even Shakti to be in tapas. To throw an arrow you have to first pull it backward. Shravan Maas is that nivruti kala, where even Shakti goes inward. The restlessness of the soul is quenched by these tapas.

In life, there is contrast everywhere, opposites co-exist. Heat and cold, mountain and valley, greenery and snow – there are several such instances. Dynamism and stillness are the contrast of energy. It is this contrast that adds juice to life.

As Shiva's ardhangi, they represent all the beautiful contrasts that enhance the quality of our lives. Shiva is full of compassion and she is full of grace. Shiva is the still substratum of this creation and she is the dynamic expression. Shiva is benevolent and she is magnificent. Shiva is intelligence with innocence she is intelligence with skill. In this way, they share all the qualities.

Shiva and Parvati are self-luminous and are the guiding light for others. Parvati is the embodiment of love, innocence, caring, and of honoring the roles. She is the perfect daughter, wife and mother. She is the landmark for dampatya.

Parva means celebration; the celebrative aspect that comes out of sattva. When tamas dominates, there is only inertia, no celebration. Any celebration born out of Rajogun cannot last. Only in sattva can we be in celebration constantly. Shiva is the Adipati of celebration with purity of mind, intention, thought, feeling, speech, and action.

Eternal celebration is the representation of Parvati. Eternal peace is Shiva. They are an exemplary couple guiding many lives. One can't even say couple because they are really just one. Jagada pitarau vande parvati parameshwarau. They are worshipped as the parents of this creation. Pa is the root word, which refers to parabrahma, paramatma. Pa is the root for Parvati and for Parameswara. They represent the principles that are beyond the material. They are eternal symbol of celebration, joy, benevolence and love.

211. Significance of Shravaan:

In our Puranas (ancient Hindu scriptures containing stories of deities and other folk lore) it is said, 'Alankara Priya Vishnu Abhisheka Priya Shiva'.

One feels so happy in adorning Lord Vishnu, so you will always see Him well dressed and decorated with beautiful ornaments. Lord Shiva on the other hand is pleased with abhishek (ceremonial Holy bath offered to a deity). Many of us go to the temple every day to offer water to the Shiva Lingam (symbolic of Lord Shiva), but we do not offer abhishek to Lord Vishnu.

Where is Lord Shiva? Does He reside only in a temple? No, He is manifest in this whole creation. What is Lord Shiva's body like? In the scriptures it is said, 'Bramanda vyapt deha' (His body pervades this entire creation). When His body is in the entire creation then how can anyone pour water on Him? He Himself alone can shower His whole body with water.

In the month of Shraavan there are rains everywhere on Earth, as if the Earth is receiving Abhishekam from the skies. Not only that, the entire Creation appears to be receiving the Abhishekam of water from the skies. Everything is cleansed and purified by the rains, and the Earth blossoms in beauty. The Earth is His feet while the sky and constellation of stars

are garlands around His neck and Lord Shiva Himself does His own Abhishekam in this month with the clouds raining down, therefore this month is considered supreme for worshipping Lord Shiva.

The whole creation rejoices and blossoms and gets soaked in the nectar of the Divine. When the whole of Creation soaks itself in the divine, mankind too naturally have to immerse themselves in it as well. We become one with creation and the Divine, and sing the many praises of the Divine, that's why it is said to worship and pray to Lord Shiva in the month of Shraavan.

212. You Are Here For.

Time and space are infinite. Grains of sand are countless. Atoms in the universe are innumerable. So also are the stars, the galaxies.

The same is with life on this planet. There is neither a beginning nor an end, because all is spherical. A sphere has no beginning and no end, no goal or direction.

Truth has no direction, no goal. Truth itself is the goal, and Truth is infinite.

Feeling and experiencing infinity within this finite body, living timelessness within the timespan of life, uncovering bliss within the misery - this is what You Are Here For.

213. Higher State of Consciousness

At any given time in the waking state of consciousness one of our senses dominates i.e. sight, smell, touch, hearing or taste. What is the purpose of each of these senses? What do we want from the senses? It is a feeling of elevation and joy. We only want to look at something if it is joyful. We don't look at something that is not joyful, that doesn't bring us joy. The same is true with good music and tasty food; it gives us joy and satisfaction.

We lead most of our life through three states of consciousness whether we like it or not: waking, dreaming and sleeping.

In the waking state of consciousness, we experience the world through the five senses. Our mind or our Self is much bigger than the senses. We seek elevation and joy from these senses. If any one of the senses is missing, the entire dimension of that sense is lost. One who cannot hear is bereft of the whole arena of sound. Similarly, one who cannot see is deprived of all the beautiful sights and colors.

Each of the five elements is connected with a particular senses. The water element is connected with sense of taste. If there was no saliva or water in your mouth, then you

would not be able to taste. The earth element is connected with smell, fire with sight and air with touch or prana and either space or akasha with the sense of sound.

But sense is more important and much bigger than the object of the sense. The mind is higher than the senses because our senses have a limited capacity to enjoy. How much one can see, touch, smell or hear? Each sense gets tired within a short period of time. The mind is infinite, its desires are many, but the capacity of the senses to enjoy is limited. The imbalance in the system will remain. Greed is wanting more and more of sensory objects. Even though one can only enjoy a limited amount during a lifetime, one wants all the wealth in the world.

Giving too much importance to sensory objects leads to greed; giving too much importance to the senses leads to lust; and giving too much importance to the mind and its desires leads to delusion. We hold on to the concepts of the mind and want things to happen in a certain way. Thus, the concepts in our mind impede us from perceiving the infinite consciousness that is a part of us.

This is not to say that the senses or the mind are bad. This is what is called Viveka, we must learn to discriminate between things and be aware of what is happening at all times; that is when clarity dawns on us. This is the first step toward the higher state of consciousness, wherein we don't just live in three common states.

In the waking state, one is constantly engaged in looking, eating, working, etc. The other extreme is the sleeping state where one is completely cut off and dull. The dullness and heaviness linger even after waking. The more one sleeps, the duller one feels since a lot of energy is expended in sleep. Then there is the dreaming state where one is neither asleep nor awake. Here, you neither feel at rest nor are aware of your surroundings.

The higher state of consciousness is somewhere in between the waking, sleeping and dreaming states. Here, we know we "are" but we don't know "where" we are. This knowledge that I "am," but I don't know "where" I am or "what" I am, is called Shiva. This state gives the deepest possible rest that one can experience and one can achieve this through meditation. This is called fourth state of consciousness.

The mind becomes so fresh, delicate and beautiful by taking a dip in the fourth state. This forth state is called 'Shiva'.

This fourth state, wherein we are awake but at the same time we are at complete rest together. What we usually do in the waking state of consciousness is to keep ourselves constantly engaged in activity, either in looking, seeing, eating, smelling or hearing. The other extreme is when you are asleep. We are completely cut off.

Turiya or the forth state of consciousness is where we just chant the mantra and then drop the mantra. Then we find there is no mantra and there is no thought and we experience

few moments of very peaceful deep rest.

A higher state of consciousness will not drop on your head from heaven one fine day. It will never happen. The sapling of consciousness is within you -- it needs to be nurtured through spiritual practices like meditation and it will start growing. Some coconut trees yield in three years, and some in 10 years and those that are not nurtured never yield, they simply exist.

Meditation is like a seed, the more we cultivate it the more it grows. The more we do it regularly the more it cultures the whole nervous system. The whole body and our physiology under goes a change. Every cell of the body gets filled with prana and the more prana there is in the body the more we are filled with bubbling joy and love.

Each cell in our body has the capacity to hold the infinity. Utilize the full potential nature has bestowed upon our system, to hold the infinity in every cell of our body.

For that we need to practice meditation regularly. Once it gets set in our daily routine then we feel fine about it. It is no longer a burden or something that needs to be done. It becomes part of our life.

Meditation helps in two ways - it prevents stress from entering the system and simultaneously releases accumulated stress. They start happening simultaneously and we tap the source what we are, the joy we are. You are happy and fulfilled.

As this state consumes us more and more, anything we see, feel or look at, become more intense and more beautiful. Each of our senses then does the job of other senses too. Your knowledge becomes clearer and becomes more intuitive. We no longer feel that our body is some 'body', but part of the whole, part of the entire creation and the entire creation is part of you.

With the assimilation of meditation into daily life, a higher state of consciousness - the fifth state of consciousness i.e. called cosmic consciousness dawns within us.

Cosmic consciousness perceives the whole universe as part of oneself. When we perceive the world as a part of us, love flows strongly between the world and us.

This love empowers us to overcome the opposing forces and the disturbances in life. Anger and disappointments become fleeting emotions that occur momentarily and then vanish.

In higher state of consciousness, intuition develops and the ability to see and perceive grows. We don't have to sit and dream about what state of consciousness we are going to get to. The highest is the simplest. Attaining higher states of consciousness does not require any complicated strategy; one just needs to learn the art of letting go.

The confluence of knowledge, understanding and practice makes life complete. When you

grow into higher states of consciousness, you find that you are no longer thrown off-balance by different situations and disturbances. You will see that the simplest and most beautiful state of our being has been with us all the time. It has never left us! It is just clouded. Through knowledge, grace and wisdom, these clouds disappear. They come down as showers and help you grow.

You become strong yet soft - a delicate and beautiful individual capable of accommodating different values in life without any conditions. As your consciousness opens and the whole system gets physically, mentally and spiritually elevated.

When your values are more important to you and you grow in them you start leading a life worth living, a life for which you are born.

214. Gurudev, you have always taken care of me. I have only one wish: For as long as I am in this body and in my other births to come, please make me your disciple and liberate me. Show me the truth so that I can liberate others too.

Sri Sri: Recently, a saint came to see me in Rishikesh, and in our congregation he said a beautiful thing. He said, 'One who has learnt in this school will stay. One who has not learnt only will leave'.

Usually, in a school, if you have learnt and you pass you leave the school and you move on. This is such a school that if someone passes over here, they stay forever. It is very interesting. One who passes in this school will not leave but will stay on!

215. Please elaborate upon the contradictory nature of truth.

Sri Sri: If you go to any temple in India, not only will you see idols of Gods and Goddesses, but you will also see the idols of many demons (representing negativity and delusion).

Gods and Goddesses acquired their position because they were able to overcome these demons. If there were no demons, then how will they acquire their position? So whatever you find contradictory in nature are actually complimentary to each other.

Take milk for example, is milk good or bad? If you drink only as much milk as is needed, then it is good for you. But if you drink too much, then the same milk can cause indigestion also. So when taken in excess, the same milk can harm you.

In the same way, is poison good or bad? All medicines and life-saving drugs have a warning label written on them that says, if taken in excess they are poisonous. So poison can help in saving life, and it can also take one's life. That is why it is said that these aspects of Nature may appear to be contradictory, but in reality they are actually complimentary to each other.

When you go deeper in knowledge then you will realize this.

A hero in a movie has some importance only when there is a villain also. If there is no villain in the movie, then the hero has no job, except to eat and sleep. When there is some mischief or some conflict that the villain creates, then all the talents and skills of the hero blossom and become evident.

216. How your self-image restricts you? "How do we become you?"

Sri Sri: "What stands between you and me is your self image. Your self image restricts you from being me. Self image whether good or bad causes misery.

When you think good about yourself in a very subtle manner you think bad about others. Then anger, jealousy, and hatred - everything follows.

When you think badly about yourself you feel low and again you start getting angry and you hate everyone else. If you think good about yourself you are in trouble and when you think bad about yourself you are in greater trouble.

So drop your self image".

217. Who wakes up first? You or God?

You wake up first. God is still asleep. When you wake up first, you experience pain and pleasure. You become aware of the shortcomings of the world and its beauty. Then you cry for help and seek the ultimate and then you wake up God and when God is awakened in you, there is no "two".

When both God and you are asleep, there is inertia. When the "I" is asleep, there is no experience.

God is in you in seed form. When he wakes up, you cease to exist. God is asleep in every particle in this universe. It's you who wakes up first and then you awaken God and when God wakes up, neither you nor the world remain.

The rishis made a mockery. They created a practice of awakening God every morning. They call it Suprabhatam service. Many find this ridiculous because they don't understand the depth of it. Only awakened God can see that God is asleep everywhere. Laughter

Brinda: Why should we wake up?

Sri Sri: Because you are not asleep. If you were asleep, how can you ask the question?

Bill: Once you are awake, can you go back to sleep?

Sri Sri: If you have not had tea, of course.

Bill: Who wakes us up?

Sri Sri: You figure that out.

218. See Life From a Bigger Perspective

See life from a bigger picture. How many of you think that you are going to be here forever?

How many of you are thinking that you are going to be here for the next thirty years, raise your hands. How many of you are thinking that you are going to be here for more than fifty years, raise your hands and how many of you are going to be here for the next hundred years?

We don't see life from a bigger perspective. My dear, you are not going to be here forever, just remember. But all of this is going to be there, Malaysia will be there, Kuala Lumpur will be there, but you won't be here. This was here even before you.

You will be here for the next 30 to 40 years, then what, where will you be? What is life? Who are you? These questions should arise in you and when they do, that shows that our intellect is maturing. Are you with me? Do all of you agree with what I am saying?

So when we see life from a broader perspective then small, insignificant things fall off, all that little quarrel, worries, what that person said, what this person said, it all falls away. So what if somebody insulted you; so what! The person who has insulted you will no longer be here. Everybody will pack-up; they won't even pack up, they will simply go. There is nothing to pack here.

On your journey you at least have to pack your luggage, but here you will simply disappear one day, that's it! See this temporary phase of life from a broader perspective. When you see life in a broader picture something will shift from within you, you will wake up and see, 'Oh wow, what am I worried for'.

Just turn back and see, ten years back you were worried and you are still here now. Five years back you were worrying over nothing, you are still present now, alive! How much time you have wasted in judgments, worries and in unproductive thinking, yes or no?

Yes, we should learn from our own experiences. How much time we waste in complaining and all our life energy get drained and diseases come. Blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, etc., all of these are a result of unproductive and negative feeling.

So we need to shift this whole cycle. We feel negative, then we see everything negative and then we feel depressed, and once we feel depressed then we feel there is nothing else positive and like this you go into a vicious circle.

You need to come out of it and meditation, yoga and pranayama is all about this – How to manage your mind and how to uplift your spirit, and that is really the blessing.

219. What is a Kundli (a person's astrological chart), and are all the things written in the Kundli true? My mother-in-law says that according to her Kundli she will take Sanyas when she is 50 years old. So will she leave us when that happens?

Sri Sri: No, there is nothing like that. Astrologers say many things at times. Like I just explained, the Kundli simply gives you pointers or indications as to how things would happen.

Take your mother-in-law for instance; it says that she will attain dispassion after the age of 50. But that does not mean that she will abandon her family and become a recluse. If she continues to do her sadhana and meditation, then she will be able to fulfil all her family responsibilities and at the same time also continue to move forward on the spiritual path. This is what you should understand.

You should not bother too much about all these things. May be you trouble her a lot, that is why she must have said this thing (laughter).

220. Experience Infinity with Love

It is possible through love. In love one keeps on repeating same things again and again. When we think of love you are in love. Person in love really don't need any subject to talk, they discuss silly things.

If you are falling in love with someone actually you start loving yourself. It is very tough to realize this. We think we are in love with someone & we name them as someone. Love is formless. It is infinite energy.

Surrender: - This is very interesting that whomsoever you love, you surrender to them. Word surrender is generally considered as action taken after being defeated by someone but in actual it is not submission. Only the brave, the knowledgeable and the wise can surrender.

The definition of surrender is little deeper that surrender is realizing everything belongs to the divine or to the God. We think everything happens on its own. Whatever actions we do it happens on its own. Nature is taking care of whatever is happening. This is what we

believe in. We are relaxed because of this realization that everything is taken care by some energy or force or the God. This is surrender.

Our love towards all this creation makes us believe in these things. We feel we are the part of this creation. We surrender to the nature for taking care.

Obstacles in the way: - There come some hindrances like lust and attachments in love. We feel emotions through sex. One enjoys the sex but it never leads one to anywhere at the end it brings inertia more indulgence and love decreases it goes down.

It becomes difficult for one to win over lust. Whenever desire arises in you, if you are aware then you worship it, recognize it and offer that desire to divine.

Some people try to behave in different ways. They are very nice outside but inside something else go on. It is not about how other people see you it is all about how you feel inside. Sometimes be rough outside if needed but be soft and gentle inside. Avoid hating anyone or getting angry at people.

Prosperity: - Have a belief that someone always loves you. If you feel like nobody loves you know for sure you are loved. Earth loves you, Nature loves you all this creation loves you. Once you realize this life is real celebration. Looking at life from bigger dimension makes your life beautiful.

In general we think the person who has freedom to go wherever he wants to go, whenever he wants, is a prosperous person.

But if we look at businessmen, or millionaires, they have lot of money, lot of freedom to go anywhere, but are they really prospered? They are worried about their shares in market, businesses. They are free outside but their minds are filled up thoughts & worries. Now do you think he is prosperous?

Wake up and see you are rich! If you smile often, you are rich. Someone with lot of money cannot smile. Check how many friends do you have and how many friends' rich people have.

I am not supporting poverty but come out the poor mind sets & poor thoughts that we have. It is important to have your minds rich.

Poor or rich should not be decided on basis of money but richness of thoughts, and minds. Prosperity should be measured on willingness to share what you have with all around you. The sign of prosperity is the trust and confidence that you'll get what you need tomorrow.

Being Content is the Key: - Live your life to the best. If you are useful to people, there will be many people to help you when you are need. There are many examples like Mother

Teresa, Vinoba Bhave for whom there were hundreds of people to care of them. Serve everyone without any expectation and miracles will happen to you too. Give your devotion a chance to work.

Contentment is another sign of prosperity. People from my family who served selflessly and all of them have great faith that what ever they do the others they will get it. They all were always happy and ready to serve. All felt this world as one family.

This is the secret of happy life. Serve without expectation. God or nature loves us without any conditions; you are rich and prospering if your smile never goes away.

221. There is a constant running for recognition and importance in my life. All my decisions are based recognition. Importance has been one of the major motivations for me to do any work including seva. I can see this sometimes but still dwelling into it. Please advice.

Sri Sri: It's good that you recognise. Once you recognise it you are already coming out of it. Once or thrice you do seva but don't tell anyone about it. Quietly you do. Don't put your name. Quietly giving. Gupt daan. You take pride once or twice to do seva for which you don't get recognition. That very act gives you so much joy. Once you get the taste of that act that is purely seva. You will find it so blissful, other acts that you do for recognition is okay. it's natural.

222. If something bad is happening, what do we do about that?

Sri Sri: First, you accept that something bad is happening, and then realize that you want to stop the wrong from happening. The wrong will stop at the right time.

223. When everybody is sleeping, Guruji is awake. Don't you face any problem because of that?

Sri Sri: There is a watchman in front of the house when you sleep. For someone with big problems, small problems don't bother them. Yogis are not bothered about what people normally worry about. For yogis, anything is possible.

224. Guruji, I get bored nowadays. I am contented in my heart but nothing gives me joy except from your talks. What should I do?

Sri Sri: My dear, why do you have so much time sitting and thinking about yourself? If you are happy, go and do seva (service). We have lots of things to do. Care for others, do some service. There is so much to learn. Learn more. Don't run behind joy. Let joy run behind you. If you follow joy, misery will follow. If you follow wisdom, fun and joy follow. Wherever you

go, fun tags behind you.

225. Is it important to get married? How do I know that someone is right for me or not?

Sri Sri: You have to decide if you want to get married or not. This is something that neither your parents nor your Guru should decide. With whom, that also you decide. This includes decision of both you and the person whom you want to get married to. What I say in this is 'Choice is yours, blessing is mine'.

226. I have seen people around you grow beyond their capacities. How do you motivate and inspire them?

Sri Sri: The president of the World Bank asked me the same thing, "How come all your projects find success? We also start many projects, but all do not find success". It is not just the money, but your intention, attention and clarity that work. If we change the way we look at things, we find everything starts from within. If they are better inside, they get better outside. You become the agent for change.

227. I just want to thank you for all the blessings. Why is that every time I see you I cry?

Sri Sri: Oh my god, you are taking away my reputation! Every time people see me they smile. Yet tears of love and gratitude are also very precious. When the heart opens it brings tears to the eyes.

228. What if you give a promise and then take it back?

Sri Sri: It is not the promise, which is important. What is important is: what is best forever body, for all human beings. Suppose you have promised your daughter to take her skiing but if the weather forecast says that there will be a snow storm, what will you do? Will you take her out because you promised or will you be intelligent and say, "The promise will not bring happiness now, so I take back my promise and not take you there now".

229. I feel afraid to be happy for the past few years. As soon as things start getting good for me I fear to feel happy. Is it safe to be happy?

Sri Sri: Definitely. There is a proverb 'God measures the tail and gives to animals'. If an elephant tail is given to a cat it can't lift it. So that they can easily wag it. All problems are like tails. Nature will not give you a problem, which you can't solve. You simply have to wait and watch. You will overcome it. Don't be afraid to be happy. You should spread happiness

and not hold on to it.

230. How can I cultivate gratitude?

Sri Sri: You don't need to cultivate. Just wake up. Be thankful for your own life. The moment you see how much you have received gratitude comes in your life. There are people who are so unfortunate. Don't have meal, can't see, no friends, no roof, no home. You have million reasons to be grateful. Simply open our eyes and see. When you are grateful then you will see it brings positive energy coming your way and then better things happen.

231. Train Your Mind Again and Again

Today, let us contemplate on the difference between Atma (the soul or the Self) and the mind.

The soul is unchanging, and it is the same at all times, but the mind keeps on changing from time to time. This is why our mind has been linked to the moon (referring to the different phases of the waxing and waning moon).

It is said, 'Chandrama manaso-jayate' (From the Purusha Sukta in Rig Veda; meaning: From His Cosmic Mind was born the Moon).

There is a deep connection between the moon and the mind. Just as the moon waxes and wanes over the days, in the same way our mind also experiences ups and downs. Sometimes it expands, sometimes it contracts. Sometimes it is happy without any reason, and sometimes it is miserable without any reason.

This is why people through the ages have said, 'One who conquers the mind conquers the entire World'.

It is said, 'Manaiva manushyanaam karanam bandha-mokshayo'. It means, the mind alone is the reason behind bondage and liberation. Whether we experience some bondage or attachment, or whether we feel free, the reason for this is the mind. So we have to train the mind again and again.

This is the essence of knowledge. As we go on practicing this regularly, we gradually attain the siddhi (extraordinary ability) to tame the mind, just as a person, after repeatedly going through problems in life gradually gains the ability to smile through them. Then a stage comes where he does not feel any misery in spite of a problem.

For example, if you scold a child once, he feels very sad. But if you scold the child every day,

then he becomes so habituated to it that he feels nothing. Then the child thinks, 'Oh, I keep getting a scolding every now and then, it is nothing!' Then the child does not get troubled by it and just moves on.

In the same way, as we go through the experiences of life (whether pleasant or unpleasant), a stage comes when this realization dawns within us that 'Everything is nothing'. That is when we begin to get established in the Self. To be established in the Self means that regardless of the person, object or situation that comes before us, we do not lose our smile and equanimity even for a moment.

Even if we do lose it, it is momentary and we instantly gain it back. Then we are strongly and firmly established in the Self. We do not get disturbed by petty and trivial matters and even if we do, then it does not stay for very long. Its effect lasts only as long as that of a line drawn on the surface of water. It does not become permanent like a line etched in stone. Then it is said that one has become a Siddha (a perfected one), that one has truly become established in the Self.

But for this to happen, we have to regularly train the mind. This is what is meant by conquering the mind, or 'killing' the mind, as some say. You know, some people say you must conquer the mind, while some say you must kill the mind. Both are one and the same, just the way of saying it is different. Gaining victory over the mind or vanquishing the mind is the same thing.

Now to achieve this, the Guru is the way. When the Guru appears, the mind disappears. Why is this so? It is because of deep faith (when there is deep faith, then the mind is in a state of surrender).

The devotee has deep faith in the Guru, because he is aware of the nature of his mind. The mind is not dependable; it keeps oscillating from one thing to another. Sometimes it likes this, sometimes it likes that. Sometimes it says, 'Yes', and sometimes it says, 'No'.

It is only when one observes everything with Prajna (an awakened intellect or wisdom), then one is able to see things from both near (in the present) and far (in the future) with unwavering clarity.

Otherwise, if we perceive everything only through the mind, then we feel a sense of restlessness (as the mind keeps jumping from one thing to another).

That is why when children are making decisions regarding their career; they usually consult three or four wise people. Even if they have a strong desire to do something, they will put it aside for a while and consult someone experienced before actually doing it. Why? It is because we simply cannot rely on our mind, which keeps moving from one thing to another.

The mind is fickle, sometimes it likes something, and sometimes it dislikes something. The

first thing that we cannot trust in the world is our own mind. Everyone and everything else comes second. It is our own mind that deludes us in the first place. Our mind is deceptive. This is why we must again and again strive to silence the mind, and be established in the Self.

Latch yourself firmly onto that (Self) which is eternal, unchanging, and unshakeable, that which neither expands nor contracts. That is what you are, that is what I am, and that is what God is.

We often think, 'Who is God? What does God look like? Where is He?'

I tell you, just have this deep unshakable faith that there is a supreme power which is making everything happen. That Supreme power belongs to you, and is within you. Just have this firm faith and repose in the Self. Then meditation happens effortlessly.

Today a scientist came to visit me. He is a practicing neurologist. He showed me a very nice presentation. What he told me was very interesting. It is said that one attains a human birth after passing through 84 Lakh births (here meaning different types of bodies or forms of life). The scientist was correlating this fact with the evolution of the brain. The lower part of our human brain - the Brain Stem is called the reptilian brain, and it is present in all other animals also. The layer above it (which controls more evolved life functions) is said to be present only in Mammals.

It is said that the frontal lobe of our brain resembles that of the dolphin's (regarded as a highly intelligent sea animal). So the makeup of the brain has evolved and developed differently for different creatures. Just as we speak about the 84 Lakh births, the brain as an organ too has developed and evolved differently for different creatures and species.

The brain is very astonishing. When our ancient Rishis were recognizing and counting the different tattvas (fundamental elements or principles) in this creation, they counted the brain too as one of them.

We should take interest in our scriptures, in this knowledge. We should take some time out every day and listen to knowledge. Purify your mind with knowledge again and again. Otherwise if we indulge the mind too much in just eating, drinking and other desires, it becomes dull and restless. Our intellect becomes unstable. So channel your mind one-pointedly towards knowledge at all times. Keep practicing this regularly. By doing this, we gradually gain the siddhi to conquer the mind.

You should read Yoga Vashishtha (a sacred scripture containing the enlightening dialogue between Lord Rama and Sage Vashishtha). Read the Ashtavakra Gita again and again. Just reading once is not enough.

Siddhi means perfection. It means we become skilful in conquering or vanquishing the

restless mind. Attaining this skill is a great thing and all of us are capable of doing this. It is not that only some of us can do this and others cannot. No, not at all. In fact, it is very simple and easy to attain.

232. Why did God create so many galaxies, universes, people etc? What was His purpose?

Sri Sri: Well, he couldn't find a better job to do (smiles)!

It's obvious - you ask someone who is playing soccer. When so many people are fighting over that little ball, if an alien comes and watches 22 people fighting over one ball, he will ask, "This world has so many things, why don't you just give a ball to each player? They are busy falling over each other and kicking that one ball into the net, and so many people are happy about this. Why cause such a commotion? Just give them a ball and let them put it through the net".

For an alien, this appears unintelligent and purposeless. But fans of soccer will say, "Oh we had such a fantastic time!" The one purpose of everything that man created is happiness. It is for the same purpose that God created all this and He is enjoying it like He is watching a soccer game. No other purpose.

233. When we are children, we complain to our parents. When we go to school, we complain about our teachers and our friends. When we start working, we complain about our boss or our colleagues at work. How do we get free from this habit of complaining all the time?

Sri Sri: That's it! Once you have realized and become aware of this tendency about yourself, then just know that you are out of it. A complaining mind usually complains about things that happened in the past. When we do not look forward to the future with a positive mind set, and when our Prana (life force energy) is low, then our mind tends to get entangled with the events of the past, and it starts to regret or complain about them. That is why the wise ones around us who have foresight encourage us by saying, 'Drop all this garbage of the past. Just smile and move forward. Your complaining does not help improve or resolve anything'.

234. What is this soul? We have heard so much about it, about self-realization. What is soul? What is self? Want to know it?

Sri Sri: How many here have studied Physics or Chemistry? Everyone here must know a little about Physics. Our body is made up of billions of cells. Each cell in the body has a life. You use body scrub to get rid of dead skin cells. So many cells are born and dying every day.

You are not an individual person. This is how the ancient rishis or sages referred to it. You are a walking township. Purusha is a town. The soul lives in the town or the body that moves around. Do you know that in your intestines there are 50,000 bacteria?

This body is changing everyday. Yet something is also not changing. To understand this, you should study a beehive. You have seen a beehive? What keeps it there? The queen bee. Once the queen bee is gone, everything disappears.

In the same way, your body is made up of billions of atoms. There is a queen bee in your body. Each body is a beehive full of honey.

Locate the queen bee within yourself and that is meditation. Billions of atoms are present throughout your body. It is the same in a human body as in an ant or an elephant. The outer size of the body is irrelevant. It is the unknown or atma (self), which is non-changing. It always remains. Nothing can shake you with this knowledge. You will feel at home with everybody.

Nothing will disturb you. This is the essence of spirituality.

235. What is it that is bothering you? Wake up and see, everything is going to finish. Everything is going to come to an end one day. This very awareness, that everything is going to finish one day, can take you out of the worrying tendency of the mind. This is the ultimate: Everything is going to finish one day!

So many things have happened in the past, some pleasant and some unpleasant, they are all gone. Similarly, what is today will vanish tomorrow. This is your own experience. When you see that everything is changing, everything is vanishing, and then you become so solid, so strong, yet so soft and centered.

Then come relationships. Relationships cause you problem and you get so heartbroken. Wake up and see, before the relationship, you were alive and kicking, you were laughing, smiling, and happy. Remember the days before you met the person and started your relationship. Life was okay. So it will be like that afterwards also, so why do you have to be so upset about it?

Are you worried about health? How healthy are you going to keep yourself? However healthy you are, one day it is going to finish and your connection with the body is going to end. That doesn't mean you shouldn't keep yourself healthy, but sitting and worrying about your health is nonsense. Do what is needed to take care of your health but no point in worrying about it.

Finance is causing you to worry? Look at the birds, look at all the animals, they all get their food? Nature provides everything. Nature is a big provider, so trust that nature will give you

what you need. Your consciousness is like a field, whatever seed you put there, that sprouts. You put a seed of lack, and then lack comes. If you say, 'Yes there is abundance', then abundance comes.

236. Gurudev, a lot of people want to sit in front of you during satsang, and often it leads to some battles. Does it matter how close we sit to you if you are everywhere?

Sri Sri: I tell you a secret; they simply don't know that more blessings go to the people who are the back (laughter). They should drop this 'Me' and allow everyone a chance to come to the front. 'Yesterday I sat, today let someone else sit' this should be the attitude. Unless you have a role to play, i.e., you are singing or you are a translator. Otherwise, give space for others. That shows that you have digested something of what you heard, else all the knowledge that you have heard is gone.

237. Dear Gurudev, how to find a balance? I am attracted to spirituality but also the material world.

Sri Sri: It is okay, they are not in opposition. You should have balance in life. Work hard, earn money, save it and save some time for meditation.

People who are ambitious, who work hard and make money, don't forget to brush their teeth or eat their food, isn't it. However busy they are earning money, they take time to enjoy their food. Like that, spirituality is food for soul, so do this also.

Some people are more interested in spirituality and they go deeper. They say, 'I have seen enough wealth in life and I will keep doing my work, but I will also do more work for betterment of people', then life takes off to another level.

These are different levels in life. You can sit in any step you want. The first step, second step, third step or the ultimate step. It is your choice.

238. Dearest Gurudev, please can you talk about domestic violence and give some knowledge on this. What is the role of acceptance and responsibility when a spouse feels that their actions are in proportion to their hurt?

Sri Sri: Listen, when two people are living together, there will definitely be arguments. However compatible, no two people can think the same things all the time. There will be difference of opinions. If both have sweet talks all the time, both will land up having diabetes (Laughter). Sometimes, misunderstandings do crop it and it should come.

When one gets upset the other should be quiet; take turns to get upset. If both get upset at

the same time, it is a problem and if you compete by saying, 'You got upset, now I will get more upset than you' then there is a bigger problem. If one is getting annoyed, the other keeps quiet. The other can take their turn the next time. If you want, you can give back twice as much, but not at the same time and the same place. To one bad day, you can add another bad day, but don't make the days so horrible that you can't continue anymore. One should take turns in getting annoyed or upset. This should be the basic ground rule. If someone is upset, support them.

Now, domestic violence happens because of anger, and alcohol. It happens many times that there is no argument, but a person comes back home drunk and hits the spouse. If someone is drunk, they don't know what they are doing. This is a big problem all over the world, especially in developing countries. Men come home drunk and beat their wives. Next day they say, 'Oh, please forgive me, it's not me, it's the drink'. This is no good.

Marriage is give and take, or compromise. You cannot say, 'I want it this way only', no! You have to let go of your wishes and desires and listen to what the other person wants. You have to compromise somewhere in between. If there is no compromise, then there are arguments. When there are arguments, then the fight happens.

Stress is another cause of domestic violence. If people are stressed, sometime or the other, it is going to erupt. So people should know how to get rid of stress.

Then, everyone should have some purpose or goal in life. If both husband and wife, direct their energy into something useful or bigger, they will not police each other, or sit on each other's head and blame each other. They won't go on bickering about each other's mistakes. So if they have a bigger goal in life and are busy doing that work, then things go smoothly.

When two lines run parallel with a goal in front, they are together all through like the railway tracks. But if they are just focused on each other, then they cross at some intersection. So it is important that two people living together should not bore each other so much that both want to run away from each other.

To keep the relationship alive and charming, spirituality and knowledge is a must. Big heartedness is a must, a greater vision is a must and leave space for each other. Then domestic violence will not happen.

239. Three Levels of Spiritual Practices

A higher state of consciousness will not simply happen one fine morning. The sapling of consciousness is within you - it needs to be nurtured through spiritual practices like meditation. Some coconut trees yield in three years, and some in 10 years and those that are not nurtured ever yield, they simply exist.

Attaining higher states of consciousness does not require any complicated strategy; one just needs to learn the art of letting go. The confluence of knowledge, understanding and practice makes life complete.

With the assimilation of meditation into daily life, a higher state of consciousness called cosmic consciousness dawns within us. Cosmic consciousness perceives the whole universe as part of oneself. When we perceive the world as a part of us, love flows strongly between the world and us. This love empowers us to overcome the opposing forces and the disturbances in life. Anger and disappointments become fleeting emotions that occur momentarily and then vanish.

When you grow into higher states of consciousness, you find that you are no longer thrown off-balance by different situations and disturbances. You become strong yet soft -- a delicate and beautiful individual capable of accommodating different values in life without any conditions.

As your consciousness opens and the whole system get physically, mentally and spiritually elevated, your life truly becomes worth living.

There are three levels of spiritual practices, which lead to higher consciousness.

The first one is called Anva Upaya. The second is Shakta Upaya, and the third one is Shambava Upaya. Shiva, Shakti and Anva.

All practices in the world can be categorized into these three categories.

Anva is the lowest; means the very beginning. All the japa, mantras, poojas, yogasanas, breath control, everything comes under Anva Upaya. They are called Upayas, which means remedies.

Above this is Shakta. Shakta is only mental, i.e., inside. There is no outer thing, no mantras in it. It is the effect of the meditative state that is Shakta Upaya. When you sing, meditate, do pranayam and Sudarshan Kriya (Kriya begins with Anva Upaya but then), it leads to Shakta Upaya, when you are just energy. Here there is no effort, there is no doing. Just a little bit effortless effort is there.

Then the Shambava or Shiv Upaya is just pure awareness. Just a state of awareness. Shambava Upaya means that there is no means (way) to do it, it is just a happening, it will just happen. Even then it is still called an Upaya.

So the purpose of Anva and Shakta Upaya is to go to Shambava Upaya wherein you become one with Shiva (the fourth state of consciousness). There is no two, there is no doer, you are Shiva, and that is Shambava Upaya.

Usually people who have experienced some degree of Shambava Upaya, they simply discard the other levels. If you read, some people have said that there is no point in doing pranayama, or, there is no point in chanting mantras, or there is no point in doing Pooja. They are all talking from the level of Shambava Upaya, but all these practices have their own place too.

See, for example, if you go to the Prime Minister of a country, the Mayor doesn't matter much. But suppose the Mayor has a say as well, then even if you go to the Prime Minister the mayor of this town can put some hurdles, isn't it? The beaurocrats can put some hurdles.

So the ancient system is attending to everybody and giving everyone their rightful place and that is how all this, Anva Upaya, Shakta Upaya, everything is maintained because they have some purpose.

240. When I meditate I am asked to keep leather items away. I am told that Lord Shiva is in Vajarasan on tiger skin, is it so?

Sri Sri: Somebody asked me, 'Shiva also drinks alcohol'. I said, 'First Shiva drank poison (halahal). Can you drink poison? Then we will talk'. Don't think on these lines. Those days that was the only seat.

In Gita it is written that sit on a deer skin. That means, be natural like a deer. There are already so few animals. If you kill them to sit in meditation then that it is not correct. They ask to keep leather away because there can be obstruction in flow of energy.

241. The mind keeps wandering from here to there. How to keep this mind steady at one place?

Sri Sri: There are three ways to do this.

First, keep something that you love in front of you. When there is something in front of you that you love very much the mind will not wander.

Second is to keep the attention on the breath.

Third is keeping your eyes steady. When your eyes wander here and there, your mind also wanders here and there. When your eyes are steady then the mind also becomes steady. If the eyes are steady in one place, it is impossible for the mind to wander.

This is why the most beautiful idols are made in temples so that the eyes are kept steady. In those days the mind used to wander more towards jewellery, so they put jewelry on the idols, so the mind remains steady. All the things that the mind might wander towards were

kept in one place.

The mind may wander towards beautiful flowers, so flowers were also kept. They also kept two idols, of a God and a Goddess. Some will be interested in the Goddess and some will be interested in God, and so with the twin idol the mind becomes steady right there.

So to keep the eyes steady all these things used to be done in the early days. Now the mind is so cunning, that it became used to this. So even if the idol is right in front, the mind kept wandering. Then what they did was they kept the idol on top of a hill, so one has climb and climb up the hill till they are out of breath and physically exhausted. Then when they go and stand in front of the idol, the mind becomes steady naturally.

Once the mind is steady, then the purpose has been fulfilled. Then whatever one wishes from that state of mind the Lord fulfills all those desires.

Now, going one step further another very beautiful revelation; one who can keep his vision steady without any object and keep his mind steady without any support is a yogi, is a Guru.

This kind of meditation we do in our advanced courses, with a little bit of support initially. Then without support and the mind is at peace.

242. Your presence gives so much peace and joy. I want to always have the same joy. What should I do?

Sri Sri: When you remember your experiences here, you relive that joy wherever you may be. All other experiences of the world get dissolved with the impression of devotion.

243. What is difference between self and mind?

Sri Sri: Self is the ocean and Mind is a wave.

244. Since I am in Art of Living I try to overcome my aggression. I do all the practices but sometimes I again feel very strong aggression. Could you tell me what to do?

Sri Sri: When the cloth is very clean, even a little dirt appears very big on it. Similarly, when the mind is very calm, even if a little bit of something comes up it is very overpowering. This is normal. If the cloth is all dirty one more dot, some more dust does not make a big difference. But it makes a difference when it is getting much cleaner.

So in this sense, when you have moved away from aggression, sometimes if an old

impression pops up notice the quality of it, it will be different. Before you were aggressive and the aggression stayed for long. Now also, some time you get that but you immediately become aware and you move away from it, isn't it? This is a stage and to move away from this stage, more meditation will help. No need to worry.

245. What is the most important thing a person can do to realize God in their life?

Sri Sri: Smile and Serve.

Smile at yourself. Smile at your own mind and how it vacillates. Watch your mind and smile at your mind. Don't be swayed by the mind but smile at it and serve the people around you in whatever capacity you can.

You don't have to do things that you cannot do. The world does not expect you to do that which you cannot do. See, if you are not a doctor, nobody expects you to give them medicine. Right? If you are not an engineer, nobody expects you to repair anything. The world expects from you that which you are able to do and doing what we can is service. We need to do a little bit of service. Whatever we do, a portion of it should go back to society. Everyone should do this.

My grandfather took all the gold that was in the house and gave it to Mahatma Gandhi. He sent his family to his in-laws house and stayed in Mahatma Gandhi's ashram (seva gram) for twenty years serving Mahatma Gandhi. When we came to Bangalore, my grandfather introduced my father to Mahatma Gandhi.

My father happened to have his gold chain on his neck. Mahatma Gandhi looked at it and asked "Is this necessary for you?" That gold chain, which was only fifteen grams, was all that was left. Immediately, my father said, "No, not necessary, you can take it. You are doing something for a big cause. You are doing the non-violence movement. This is for the country, for the nation, for the continent". He immediately gave it to him.

When I was in school, pride was attached to simplicity, to equanimity.

When you are equanimous, you are smiling and compassionate. The compassionate person was considered a hero. One who would never lose his temper was considered normal.

Today, unfortunately, pride gets attached to aggression and violence. Every hero is very aggressive. So, if a college student is more macho and beats up everybody, he becomes a hero, a role model.

This shift in role model is a problem all over the world. We need to bring back spirituality, the spirituality we all grew up with. Have an equanimous and balanced mind.

Show compassion to everybody.

246. Meditation - Journey From Sound To Silence

So today we are talking about meditation, Right!

What is meditation? Why do we want meditation?

In order to go deep within ourselves, to understand ourselves or to learn anything about ourselves we need to be in a cordial and homely atmosphere. A formal atmosphere is not congenial.

Do you all feel at home? Why don't you take just a moment to greet the person on either side of you and behind you?

Now tell me, how many of you think that meditation is concentration? No! You will be disappointed, meditation is not concentration. It is de-concentration.

To do any work, you need concentration but to relax and expand you don't need concentration. Relaxation is the mother of concentration and so if you relax well, you are able to concentrate better. Isn't that so?

Now how do we relax? That is what we will see this evening.

As I am speaking, do you notice what is happening in your mind? Just notice, your mind says, 'yes', or 'no'. Do you see a dialogue happening within you? It is very important to notice this dialogue.

So there are simple principles that we need to understand about meditation. Before we go into that, let's see what the benefits of meditation are.

How many of you would like to know the benefits of meditation?

The first benefit of meditation is it improves the bio-energy in our body; in our system.

Have you noticed, sometimes you meet someone and for no reason you don't want to talk to them. Whereas with some other people whom you have not met so often, still you feel some sort of closeness with them and you feel comfortable. This is because of the positive energy. Meditation creates positive and harmonious energy around us.

The second benefit is it improves health. There are number of researches on how meditation helps in hypertension, diabetes, heart problems, skin problems, nervous system problems and a number of other problems.

Third, meditation can help one to keep a pleasant mood. It is a big help in preventing many of the mental illness and physical illness.

Apart from the health benefits, meditation improves concentration. It helps one to be in the present moment. The mind vacillates between the past and the future. We are either angry about the past or anxious about the future, all the time. So meditation helps keep the mind from swinging between the past and the future to be more in the present. Different ways to meditate, so there are five ways:

First way is through physical means; through yoga and through physical exercise. When our body does certain postures, with a certain rhythm, it brings some tiredness and then the mind slips into meditation. It is very interesting to see. If you are very active you can't meditate, at the same time, if you are too well rested, you can't go into meditation. But in a state where the body has the right amount of tiredness, yet still not that tired, in that very delicate balance, the mind slips into meditation, or your whole system slips into meditation. So first is through the physical.

Second is through prana or through breath. Through breathing you can get into meditation. This we all know, Sudarshan Kriya is one of the best examples. After pranayama and Sudarshan Kriya when you sit for meditation you slip into meditation effortlessly. So a breathing technique is one way to get into meditation.

Third is through any sensory pleasure – through sight, sound, taste, smell or touch. The five sensory organs, related to five elements. The world is of five elements, earth, water, air, fire and ether. A different combination of these five elements is what this universe is made of, and these five elements are connected to the five senses that we have. Fire is connected with the eyes, smell with earth element, taste with water element, sound with ether element and touch is connected with air element.

You know, if you are in water or a swimming pool, you don't feel touch so much. Have you noticed that? Not so much but a little bit, this is because the five elements are present in each one of them. There is air element even in water, but to a small degree. So these five elements in the universe are connected to the five senses and you can go through any one of the senses to transcend them and become one in a very deep meditative state.

Fourth way is through emotions. Through emotions also you can get into meditation.

Fifth is through the intellect. You just sit and know that this body is made up of billions of cells. Ah! Something happens to you, something gets stimulated. If you go into a space museum, and something gets stimulated inside you. Doesn't it make you feel somewhat different when you get into a space museum and then get out of it? How many of you have felt like that?

247. What do you do if people don't respect you?

Sri Sri: "Thank them. They have given you freedom! When people respect you, they often take away your freedom. They expect you to smile at them, recognize them, and behave in a certain way with them. If they don't respect you, you are not obliged to answer their questions and you can drop all the formalities. Either you will be naturally smiling or frowning. So you will be complete.

When people love and respect you, you are obliged to return their courtesies because you don't want to hurt them. When they don't respect or love you, they will not be hurt by your actions and expressions. So they set you free.

When you gain respect, you often do it at the cost of your freedom. Wisdom is to put the freedom first and not bother about respect".

Question: Will freedom not bring arrogance?

"True freedom is not an "I don't care" attitude. It is lightness from within, a genuine smile and not stiffness.

When someone is stiff and arrogant, they are not really free. True love blossoms only in such freedom and when there is genuine love, respect simply follows you".

248. Gurudev, I am in silence so I can't speak but I wish to scream at some people on this course. They are so rude and think only about themselves. Shouldn't spiritual people be more considerate?

Sri Sri: Yes, you are right. I keep them here so that they cause less problems in the world. Just imagine even after having come to the spiritual field if they are rude, how would they have been in their previous incarnation without the spiritual knowledge.

You don't get disturbed by them. We are not a homogenous group here, not everybody is same. We are all different types of people here. Among the 500 people that are here there maybe only three or four very irritating people. Thankfully they are only a minority. You don't see everybody behaving that way; otherwise we would have a war here. There are some very good people here with a lot of patience as well. So put your attention on the good people, on the good-natured decent people who have courtesy.

I am also at a loss with these people. I'm also thinking how to educate them. Maybe they are slow learners. Let's hope one day they learn. Just remember there are all different types of people. We are literally in a zoo because the world is like that; it is like a zoo.

249. For a beginner like me, how do I understand what self is?

Sri Sri: Everything in the world changes. Our experiences change, our understanding changes, our intellect changes, we think differently at different times, thoughts are changing, and also our emotions keep changing.

How do you know that everything is changing? There must be something that is not changing. Without the existence of something that is not changing you cannot even know things are changing.

So you infer. E.g. when there is a smoke you say, 'there must be fire'. You just see the smoke and you infer that there must be fire somewhere. Similarly, you cannot directly experience that which is not changing, then how do you do it? Through inference.

The ancient people said there are three ways of knowing - Pratyaksha, Anumana, Agama.

There are three proofs, one is Pratyaksha - you see direct.

Second is Anumana - you infer, e.g. you see the smoke and you know there must be fire, right! So when you see that everything is changing, and you know that you can experience change only through something that is not changing, through some reference point, then you infer 'There is something that is not changing in us.

And that is called 'Self', your soul, your spirit, whatever you call it!

So we went from body to finer - Body, Breath, Mind, Intellect, Memory and then Ego. Finer than all this, is the 'Self'. What the 'Self' is? Finding that out is called spirituality is meditation! and what this 'Self' is made up of? It is!

250. All of us want to be happy and have the willingness to do something to be happy. What is the way for this?

What is the formula?

You should always think, "I don't need anything from anyone", because attachment causes misery.

When you are happy, take a sankalpa that -

1. You don't need anything from anyone
2. You should be of use to everybody, and
3. No one can make you unhappy.

After we do something for someone, we expect thanks or gratitude from them. This

expectation makes us even more miserable if they don't say thanks! We think that they are not grateful enough.

No, we don't need anything from anyone. We should keep that sankalpa in mind. Then we can be content, and we can do whatever is possible from our end.

251. There is a very intricate connection between time, mind and events. An event has an impact on the mind and time has an impact on the event and time also has an impact on mind, it's a triangle. Event is influenced by time and mind is also influenced by event and mind is also influenced by time.

'Mukti' is freeing the mind from time and events. Time and the events we cannot separate but mind we can separate from both time and the event - and the way is meditation.

So it is time makes an event pleasant or unpleasant, makes an event good or bad and it is event that makes mind pleasant or unpleasant and it is the time makes mind free or bound. So this is a very interesting combination of time, mind and events. The people who knew this were called 'Devagyas' - the one who knows the divine laws or divine plan. If you know time then you can also manage events, you can also manage mind.

The farmer knows which time to sow the seed. Suppose someone sows the seed before the rainy season or when summer is beginning - he is going to get loss. So, the farmer knows when exactly to sow the seed and he knows what time one should harvest.

So to know how the event is happening - that itself is knowledge. The events are associated with actions. Mind is associated with actions. Time is associated with actions. It's all like a trapezium - actions, events, time and mind. So do the right thing at the right time.

252. Open Your Mind to Higher Reality

You know, our body is constantly emitting energy and vibrations. You are emitting energy all the time and when you know your vibrations is what makes things happen in the world, you will know that you are in control. So when you are thinking that things are going to be negative then that is what seed you are putting in the universe and that is going to happen. So with your positive thinking, positive ideas, positive sankalpa It is said, that let positive vibrations come out of you.

Negative thoughts arise in you, yet you tell, everything is positive and how does that happen? Not by just thinking, but by relaxing. Cutting a thought with another thought is only superficial but cutting a thought by silence, by letting go, by devotion, by faith, by surrendering to God, it is deeper.

Maharishi Patanjali says that poise of mind happens when you offer all that you can't handle yourself to God, to the universal spirit.

The universal spirit is all around you, all the time. It doesn't have a form, a name but it is around you all the time and you surrender your desires to that universal spirit. Be sure and know that your problem is going to be solved. That is siddhi, perfection. You notice in your own life, be centered, relax and let go and you will see things are happening effortlessly, it has to happen that way and if you don't find that way, then there is some screw in the mind that is loose, that needs to be fixed.

People ask for blessings and I give blessings in abundance, blank cheques of blessings but you should know how to fill it, encash it and the way to encash it is, 'it is going to be done', 'my needs will be taken care of', 'best will be done' without a question. Sometimes we don't know what we desire, or we desire for something that we don't deserve, or we desire for something much less than what we deserve. Ask and it will be given. When we deserve for more and desire for less, ask skillfully. So what is the way? Ask skillfully, and how: 'I want this or anything better than this' and have that positive frame of mind because it's all neurons.

One of the scientists says that our brain has different types of neurons, and there are certain neurons, which create barriers. When a person in front of you touches someone else, the brain says, 'You are being touched' but there are certain neurons in hand which sends a signal to the brain that says, 'it is not you being touched'. If your hand is given anesthesia and then if someone touches someone else, you will also feel the touch and he (the scientist) says, we all are nothing but neurons, we all are connected, everybody is connected.

The subtler we go we find there are only vibrations, and there are no neutrons, protons, electrons but all that exists is – vibrations and then he says numbers are very important.

In Rudrapooja we say 'ekachame, trisraschame', yesterday only we understood why do we say that. We chant odd numbers first and then even numbers in the Rudrapooja. He said if numbers won't be there, the whole universe will collapse. Everything exists on numbers, on figures and if one number goes missing, the whole universe will collapse. It's like on a cell phone you want to make a call and if you dial one wrong digit the call never goes to the right person. One can't argue saying, 'If one digit is wrongly dialed, how come I can't make a call? and if everything is right, then life gets connected, so numbers are so important and it is all just vibration.

One of the greatest physicists who were in the team of creating first nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki says. 'I studied matter for 35 years to find out it doesn't exist. What exists is just vibration'. Every one of us is emitting and absorbing vibrations and chanting, singing creates such a positive vibrations; you become a source of energy.

What is the difference between a bulb, which is lit, and a bulb, which is not? One is emitting energy and in the other, no energy movement is there and all singing, chanting and meditating is like lighting the bulb. Have you noticed the difference between those who are doing all this with faith and someone who has never done this? It reflects on their face. If you haven't started noticing you better start noticing! (Laughter)

What happens when you are worrying all the time?

Suddenly you find the brain, the upper part has become like a stone, the heart has become like a stone. Similarly what happens when you hear a negative comment about yourself from somebody, the whole body has become heavy. You can't avoid people saying negative things about you. How many have this question? And how many have this experience? When someone says something negative about you or when a close friend of you is feeling very low, suddenly you also start feeling the same; your whole energy gets down.

That is why satsang is that important, this knowledge is that important. When you focus on someone who is depressed, you also feel the same and when you participate in a satsang your whole focus is shifted to knowledge. That's why the Guru is important because when you think of Guru, when you shift your focus to the Guru in a few moments, your energy gets restored; you get back to your normal self. How many of you have experienced this?

There is an old proverb 'Guru bina gati nahin' means there is no progress without the Guru because there are so many people around you and you are being tossed and turned by everybody's moods, emotions and blames, and you are stuck, you can't notice that. But when a Guru is there nothing of this will matter to you and even if it does it is only for few minutes or hours and then you are able to push through it, move through it. Like you have a rain coat and if it is raining you can always protect yourself from rain.

In this context ancient people in India, Korea, Japan even in China had said that spiritual teacher, master or a person who is on the path is so important, so that you don't have to keep feeling this negative vibrations, heaviness for days together.

Secondly, if you find nobody is available, no commune is available then what you do? Chant, do pranayama, nature walk, Vedanta or this science that everything is just vibrations.

Numbers are very important, so we chant 'Om NamahShivaya' 108 times; in Islam also they put a number 786, right? In Rudra Abhishek we chant an odd and even sequence of numbers. That changes the vibrations. Even pundits don't have answers of chanting numbers in Rudra Abhisheka.

We have to listen to the scientists to understand. They say this whole space is curved. Space is also like water, like you put a ball in water it curls. Water is a medium, like that space is also a medium and this was also said thousands of years ago in Vedas and that is why, it is the fifth element. Space is where vibration travels; it is a medium like water, air,

fire and earth and the same thing, scientists are saying today. It is amazing to see how people 10,000 years ago knew that space has a curvature, it is a medium and there are not one but 10 dimensions, which is the spirit. These facts open your mind to a higher reality.

253. The Deepest Knowledge

Remember your age? Whatever it is 25-30 years! Where were you before these 25-30 years? Where would you be after 50-60 or say 100 years Mumbai existed before you were born, this Ocean existed then too.

Do you remember how you entered your mother's womb? Do you remember how you came out in this world?

Until the age of five the child remembers his past birth. The child recognizes colors or says certain things but elders tend to overlook that.

You know, this whole universe is a play of Prana, the life force. Everything here has some life force. However, the units of Prana differ.

Stone (Pathar) has 1 unit of Prana
Water (Pani) has 2 units of Prana
Fire (Agni) has 3 units of Prana
Air (Hava) has 4 units of Prana
Ether (Akash) has 5 units of Prana
Animals and trees have 6 - 7 units of Prana

Human Being has 8 units of Prana. Hence he is called as ASHTAVASU. But humans are born with a possibility to blossom into a fully blossomed state. Lord Krishna has highest units of Prana – 16. That is why He is referred to as fully blossomed being.

You often see that every God / Goddess travels on an animal. Goddess Durga riding on a tiger! It seems so imaginative. It doesn't click to the intellect, but this is so scientific.

Each animal brings certain cosmic vibrations on the planet. E.g. Peacock descends to the planet the vibrations of Goddess Saraswati (The Goddess of knowledge), Bull's body radiation brings Shiva Consciousness (The transformational and meditative aspect of nature). Right now all Devas are here in this consciousness; all different energies are in this consciousness. All the mantras invite these auspicious vibrations.

Do you know the meanings of the months?

January, February... November, December. You all keep saying the months and you don't know the meaning!

September (sapt + ambar): 7th sky

November (nav + ambar): 9th sky

Do you know which languages these months belong to?

Audience: English

Sri Sri: No, they are all derived from Sanskrit. Sanskrit was the only original language that was prevalent in the universe in the start.

Feb is referred to as "Fag End".

March means "To Go Ahead". Iraq, Iran, Kurdistan everywhere they celebrate New Year in the month of March. In some less affected parts of India as well! So December (Dash + Ambar: 10th sky) makes the 10th sky.

You are older than the names of month. Go deep in meditation to experience all this. Else keep it in back of mind that I am much older than my age. Sometime in life it will come to you.

It is said that there are millions of Gods and Goddesses in India. In other countries it is said that God is one. In the Indian culture, we talk of families of God. A Goddess is depicted as riding a tiger, Gods have children and there are disputes amongst Gods and Goddesses. For an argumentative mind such depictions are difficult to accept.

God is Sat Chit Anand (Truth, Consciousness and Bliss). He has five karmas (actions) – Srishti (Creation), Sthiti (Preservation), Samhara (Destruction), Anugrah (Blessing) and Tirdhana (Veiling).

He is everywhere yet not visible. Just like air is everywhere but we feel it only when the fan is switched on or when wind blows.

Rishis (sages) say that there are many levels of creation. Gold is one but we can make so many different things out of it. Similarly with wheat, you can make bread as well as chapatti.

Just like that, One God displays itself in many names and forms; one Omkar is present in Brahma (Creator), Vishnu (Operator) and Mahesh (Destroyer).

When a single ray of sunlight falls on a drop of water, we see all the seven colors of a rainbow!

Before Creation, the Operator was there. Vishnu was present before Brahma. For instance, grass is present in creation and then the goat comes, a mother develops milk before she

gives birth otherwise the creation won't sustain! The Polar bear sleeps for six months and develops hunger only after the grass has sprung up.

Vishnu is depicted as resting in a lying down posture. The Master of the Creation is resting since the task of maintenance is so easy for him. This does not mean that man can afford to sleep all the time. Vishnu's sleep is different - he is sleeping on a bed of snake, which is symbolic of heightened awareness. When one rests in awareness it is called Yog Nidra (yogi sleep) or Samadhi (Meditation).

In a human body, the navel is the center of gravity. Brahma, the Creator, emerges from a lotus raised from Vishnu's navel.

It was only when Newton and Einstein rested that they could make new inventions. Newton rested under a tree and he received the knowledge of gravity as an apple fell on his head. When Archimedes was in the bath tub, he got the idea that he was looking for since a long time.

The knowledge that the whole world is round was present in the ancient Khagol Vigyan (orbital sciences including rotation, revolution). India knew about the Gurutvakarshan Shakti (gravitational force) thousands of years before Newton discovered it.

Our ancestors had this knowledge that's why they kept the Sun in the middle. In the most ancient temples, which are around 2,000 years old, you will find that the Sun God is in the middle looking towards the East and all the other planets are kept around Him.

Nowadays, it is taught that Galileo discovered that the earth is round. That was just a few hundred years ago but our ancestors knew about this from thousands of years.

Today, the scientists say that in creative people the solar plexus inside the navel is bigger than usual. When the navel blossoms, one becomes creative. In ancient India, they represented this as Brahma being born through Vishnu's navel.

Brahma, the Creator has four faces. This shows that he gains knowledge from all the four directions.

One drop of semen and an egg alone creates the entire human body. From just one anu (atom) different organs of the human body - nails, hair, ears etc are formed and even the texture of skin is different throughout.

So that one has the intention and capability to be varied. Similarly, in one God many God and Goddesses can be formed.

One human DNA has all the living beings in it, which means we can create all the living beings on the planet right from a lizard to an elephant from a single drop of the human

saliva. So this is the power in a one-drop of chromosome. This itself is God. The whole creation is filled with God.

The Sanatan Dharma is very close to the modern science. When you listen to great scientists you feel as if you are listening to Vedanta.

Even if one animal is missing from this world, the balance of the creation will be disrupted. So we need all the beings. You cannot see the Devi Shakti (energy) but this devi shakti rides a tiger as its vehicle.

The peacock has the vibrations of Kartikey Swami, who is depicted as having a peacock as His vehicle. Yet that does not mean that to worship Kartikey Swami, we need to get hold of a peacock.

God is present in every atom of the creation, not just the outside world but within our body as well. That is why before worshipping, we start with invoking the energies within our own body.

Devo Bhuvata, Devo Bhuje – Be immersed in God and worship Him.

The weapons in the Gods' hands have a deeper meaning. It is very easy to simply say that the ancient man was a coward so he placed all the weapons in Gods' hands. Such an interpretation is the imagination of a fearful man. This is wrong. Do some research; go deep in knowledge, then you will feel amazed at the minds of the people who created the Puranas.

The purpose of the Puranas was to bring you closer to God. Thus stories were created for the purpose of joy, entertainment, knowledge and science. In Hindi the word 'Purana' means old whereas in Sanskrit, it means completely new, ultra modern.

God-Goddesses are within us, are our very own so they showed human flaws of anger, jealousy etc in them as well. So that you don't feel guilty when such emotions arise in you.

254. How should be one's relation with the Master? One is an ordinary person and other is a person with so many powers. Should it be like a friend or a beloved?

Sri Sri: Let love be love. Don't give it a name. Love is above all relations. Being in love with the master is like being in Love with the divine. Master, God and spirit are not different. These all are one. Only one exists – one non-dual existence. Everything is divine.

255. "A devotee is not there even for wisdom. He is simply in love. He has fallen in deep love with the Master, with the infinity, with God. He doesn't care whether he gets enlightened or

not".

256. Five Types of Bodies

We all have five bodies.

Our first body is our environment. If there is poison in the environment, this physical body cannot exist. That is called Annarasmaya kosha. Food is not only that you eat. Environment is also food. Air is food for our lungs. Water is also food. Heat or warmth is also a kind of food. If you are in a place where temperature is -40 degree centigrade, then no matter how much food you have but you won't be able to exist. So, heat is food for our body. One of course is the food that we eat. Peace and joy are food for the soul. Our environment is our first body.

Second is Pranamaya kosha – the energy, life force. You can sense when energy is low and when energy is high. You go to a place where there is low energy, and you feel like running away. You go to a place of high energy, and you feel like staying there. How many of you had this experience?

You can feel the effect of eating fresh food and frozen food in your body. Fresh food has more prana, and frozen food has very little prana. Similarly, you find a difference in eating fresh vegetables, and eating thoroughly baked and cooked vegetables. So, second is Pranamaya kosha.

Then is breath. You can nourish your body but if your body is not breathing, it will go under Earth or become ashes. Our physical body has value because of prana, because you are breathing. 90 percent of impurities in the body go out through the breath. Only 10 percent impurities are eliminated through urine, stool and sweat.

Then next is mind - Manmaya kosha, the thoughts in the mind. Are you aware of the thoughts happening in your mind?

Then comes Vigyanmaya kosha - Intuitive awareness or knowledge. That is fourth sheet of our body.

Fifth is the bliss called Anandmaya kosha. So these are the five levels of body that one exhibits.

257. Three Types of Doers

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna beautifully describes the types of doers. He says, 'Mukta-sango 'naham-vadi, dhrti-utsaha-samanvitah siddhy-asiddhyor nirvikarah, karta

sattvika ucyate'. (18.23)

While doing work there are three types of doers:

A Sattvik doer

A Rajasik doer

A Tamasik doer

You have to see, which category you come into at this moment. It is not going to be the same all the time, it changes.

Who is a Sattvik doer? A Sattvik doer is one who, whether work has happened or not happened, whether success or failure, they have not lost their enthusiasm. Utsaha means Enthusiasm, and dhriti is that something which uplifts you and upholds you. That which sustains life and prana, the presence of that energy is a Sattvik Karta (doer).

The second type of doer is a Rajasik doer, one who is always interested in the outcome. He is so attached to the outcome that if something goes up he jumps up to the ceiling, and if something goes down he goes down along with that. He feels totally destroyed when things don't happen, and when things happen, his ego gets a boost, 'See, I did it'. This is a Rajasik doer. Though he does everything with a lot of passion, but along with the passion there is a lot of Rajas.

Rajas means, there is a lot of anger, ego, a sense of challenge, etc. Have you had this experience, if someone doesn't do something and you just challenge them, they immediately get up and say, 'I take it as a challenge'. That sense of challenge is a Rajasik Karta.

The Tamasik doer is one who thinks that everything is always bad. One who is always regretting, 'Oh, I should have done electrical engineering ten years ago, I made a mistake'. My dear, you have already crossed those ten years, what is the point of regretting.

Often you will hear mothers tell their children, 'Since 10 years I am telling you'. Or a wife tells her husband, 'It's been 30 years of our marriage and you're still like this'. So, Vishaadi means regretful or remorseful, and Dhirga Sutri means anything you tell them they would say, 'Oh, that is not possible. It is very difficult you know'. They beat around the bush so much and then come up and say how things cannot work. They find everything difficult, everything hopeless. This is Tamasik Karta.

These are the three types of doers. See at this moment, in your mind, what type of a doer is coming up? How do you move from being a Tamasik Karta to a Rajasik Karta, and then to being a Sattvik Karta? This is the challenge and this is the path.

Knowledge has an end. Knowledge completes.

So also does discipleship, for the disciple is aimed at acquiring Knowledge. Once you cross the water, however nice the boat is, you get out.

After twelve years, the disciple completes his studies. The master does a ceremony called Samavarta. He asks the disciple to now behave at par with him and allow the Divine - the Bramhan - to manifest; he thus ends the discipleship.

Sakha is a beloved companion in life and death. A sakha only wants the beloved, he longs only for the beloved. He does not care about Knowledge or liberation. His love is infinite, and infinity can never be full. His love is complete in its eternal incompleteness. There is no end on the path of love.

Arjuna was Sakha to Krishna, and although Krishna was a perfect Master, he was a Sakha, too.

What are you? a shishya (disciple), or a Sakha (beloved companion)?

258. Faith is Wealth

Faith is a wealth. If you think, by having faith in God you are doing a favour to God, you are mistaken. Faith gives you strength instantaneously. Faith brings you stability, centeredness, calmness and love. You are having faith in the guru or god does not do anything to guru or god. Your having faith gives you immediate strength. Faith is a great wealth; it is a blessing.

If you lack faith, you have to pray for faith. But to pray, you need faith. This is a paradox. (Laughter).

People have faith in the world - but the whole world is just a soap bubble. People have faith in themselves - but they don't know who they are. People think that they have faith in God - but they have no idea of God. If you want to doubt, you have to doubt everything.

There are three types of faith: faith in yourself, faith in the world, and faith in God. You need to have faith in yourself - without faith, you think, I can't do this. This is not for me. I will never be liberated in this life. You must have faith in the world. Without this, you can't move an inch in the world. Banks give you loans having faith that you will pay it back. You deposit money in the bank having faith that it will be returned. If you doubt everything in the world, nothing will happen. The same is the case with faith in the Divine - have faith in the Divine and you will evolve. All these faiths are connected. You must have all three for each to be strong.

Bill says: Atheists have faith in themselves and faith in the world, but not in God.

Sri Sri: They don't have complete faith in themselves. Lack of faith in God, in the world or in the self brings fear. Faith in the world cannot be constant because there are always

changes.

Faith makes you full - faithful. If you have faith, you are full.

Rajesh asks: What is the difference between faith and confidence?

Sri Sri: Confidence is the result. Faith is the beginning.

Faith in yourself brings freedom.

Faith in the world brings you peace of mind.

Faith in God evokes love in you.

You can be at peace by having faith in the world and without faith in God, but it is not complete peace. If you have love, there is automatically peace and freedom. People who are extremely disturbed should only have faith in God.

259. God as a child

Can you see God as a child? You have always thought of God as a father, up in the heavens somewhere. Can you see God as a child?

God is the very core of your existence. You are pregnant with God. You have to take care of your pregnancy and deliver the child into the world. Most people do not even deliver. One who delivers can also grant wishes.

God is your child. He/She clings onto to you like a baby till you grow old and die. God keeps crying for nourishment. God clings onto the devotee. He/She needs you to nourish Him/Her in the world. Sadhana, Satsang and Seva are the nourishment.

You always think of God as a father. Then you want to demand and take from God. But when you see God as a child, you have no demands.

Belma says: You cannot pray to a child; you can only pray to your father.

Sri Sri: Why do you want to pray? Why do you want to ask? A good father knows what to give.

Belma: What about surrender?

Sri Sri: Your surrender to a child is more authentic as it has no demand.

Take care of your god! Atheists are around the corner! Doubts, disbelief and ignorance are atheists in your mind, so better take care of your God!

260. The Real Glory

It is often believed that glory and dispassion are contradictory and cannot co-exist. Glory and luxury without dispassion is a nauseating pomp and show. Such glory does not bring fulfillment for anyone, it is shallow. Alternately, the dispassion that is afraid of glory is weak. True dispassion is oblivious to glory.

The glory that comes with dispassion is something that is true, that is permanent and authentic. When someone runs after glory they are shallow. Like movie stars, politicians and religious leaders who try to hold on to their status, to their glory, they are certain to lose. If you run after glory all you get is misery. When you are dispassionate, glory comes to you.

If you are afraid of glory, that means you are not well founded in dispassion. In India, the Sadhus run away from glory. They think they will lose their dispassion and get trapped in the web of the world, the circus. The dispassion is so blissful; they get attached to the dispassion.

They are afraid of losing the dispassion, the centeredness and bliss that comes along with it. This is weak dispassion. Dispassion is a state of being and glory is the happening around it. True dispassion can never be lost or overshadowed by glory. True dispassion is glorious! Real glory is true dispassion!

261. Don't be perturbed by foolishness

What really perturbs you? Isn't it the foolishness that goes on around you?

It is foolish to be perturbed by the foolishness. Foolishness cannot overpower or annihilate wisdom nor does the foolishness stay all the time. When you are not well founded in wisdom, then foolishness perturbs you, throws you out of balance. When you create space for foolishness you do not get perturbed by it, rather you will laugh and move on. Otherwise you hate, get angry or become stressed by foolish acts.

When you know that truth is eternal and invincible you take foolishness as a joke and remain unmoved by it. Those who are averse to foolishness or get irritated by it are members of the fools club. Beware! Do not sign up.

262. The Great Pleasure of Rest

There is a pleasure in rest and there is a pleasure in activity. The pleasure in activity is momentary and causes fatigue. The pleasure in rest is magnanimous and energizing. So, to the one who has tasted pleasure in rest (Samadhi), the pleasure in activity is insignificant.

All activities that you do, you do so that you can have deep rest. Activity is part of the system. However, the real pleasure is in Samadhi. In order to have deep rest, one must be active. The proper balance of both is essential. Many seek pleasure in this or that but the wise man just smiles. The real rest is only in knowledge.

263. Kick The Ball And Be In The Goal

Do you know why the earth is shaped like a globe? (Silence), so you can kick it and it will roll away! (Laughter) From the moment you wake up in the morning you are always with people and your mind is caught up in worldly thoughts. So sometime during the day, sit for a few minutes; get into the cave of your heart, eyes closed, and kick the world away like a ball.

But as soon as you open your eyes, hold onto the ball because you need to kick it again in the next session. (Laughter) During the day be 100% attached to the work, don't try to detach yourself. But when you sit for meditation, then totally detach yourself. Only those who can totally detach can take total responsibility.

Eventually you will be able to be both attached and detached simultaneously. Kick the ball and be in the goal! This is the art of living, the skill of living.

264. Prayer

What is prayer? Prayer means a call from the depth of the heart. When children cry, how do they cry? Kids cry for their mother with their whole body. When every cell of the body and every corner of the heart need something, then only you cry. Calling in an exclusive style – from your heart is prayer. Also when we do something with all our heart that is called prarthna (prayer).

A prayer happens when you feel utterly helpless or when you feel totally grateful. Both are authentic and always get fulfilled. Being both, helpless and grateful is very rare and very powerful. It is a total form of prayer.

The third condition when prayer happens is when you are in wisdom. Then you see that the quality of the consciousness has expanded beyond its limitations and has risen to another plane, another dimension which is so fulfilling, so intuitive and so full of wisdom and love.

Prayer is not asking for something; it is gratefulness, recognition of the huge tidal waves of love that God is pouring on you every moment.

Prayer and meditation are very close. In prayer, you are thanking or asking for something; whereas in meditation, one is ready to listen. Prayer is asking, Meditation is listening. You

could call meditation a higher form of prayer.

In prayer, you ask, 'Give me this, give me that', giving instructions, demanding. In meditation, you say, 'I am here to listen', what is it that you want to tell? Tell me; whenever you are free, I am here. 'In prayer you are asking for something'.

Meditation is saying, 'I am ready to listen'. Just imagine if somebody only keeps on asking and is not ready to listen to you. Don't you get frustrated? In the same way, God also gets frustrated but when you sit for meditation, and ready to listen to him, He bestows all the favors to you.

Prayer within breath is silence. Being silent and knowing that the divinity is taking care of everything - that is the best form of prayer; Culmination of prayer is meditation. Prayer goes to the peak and that is meditation.

Silence is the best form of prayer. Often prayer is in some language – German, Hindi, English, and Spanish. In fact, they all mean the same. But silence is one step further, one step beyond the barriers of language, which the whole universe can understand. Nature resonates with it. Silent prayer!

Prayer in words also has to lead you to silence in the heart. Purpose of words is to create silence. Purpose of action is to bring deep rest. Purpose of deep rest is to bring you fulfillment. In fulfillment you find joy, bliss. Purpose of love is to create blissful state deep within.

When you achieve something you are very happy, very proud about it. But there is nothing to be proud of in your achievement. If you have achieved something by your effort that means it is something, which is within your capacity to do. What is great in having achieved that which is within your capacity? All that you can gain by your own effort is not worth gaining because you already have it. That something, which is greater than you, bigger than you, is worth having and that which is greater than you can't be achieved by your effort. Isn't that so? So your achievement really means nothing.

All that is worth having in life comes out of prayer and prayer can happen only when you know that something is beyond your capacity, that you can't achieve it. Then you pray, and all that then descends to you by grace is what is worth having.

Prayer... who can pray? Just see this point. Who can pray? Only those who feel helpless can pray. If you think you can do something, you can achieve something; there is no need to pray. But when you become aware of the futility of your efforts, when you become aware that you are insignificant, that your existence is insignificant in the world, then you can pray. It's only a matter of realization. If you keep thinking you are a very important person, very significant, or that you are achieving great things, prayer can never happen in you.

Prayer happens only when you become aware of the insignificance of your existence, which matters not at all. Over thousands of years, many people have come on this earth and gone without leaving a trace. In the thousands and thousands of galaxies, millions of millions stars, the whole universe, you are nothing. You are not even a particle there. How can one be so blind as not see this reality? See yourself from the context of the whole universe. An intelligent man can see that and he will definitely feel it, feel that he is nobody, is nothing. Every person is faced with this true situation.

At certain times you feel great because you have achieved something. You say, "Yes, I have done this". At other times all your efforts fail, and you don't get the result that you wanted. Then there are two choices for you. Either you can brood over it, feel upset, depressed, unhappy, or you can make use of the same situation to pray. Become aware of your insignificance and turn the same situation into a prayer. Every helpless moment is a golden opportunity to pray.

A wise man, an intelligent man, makes those opportunities to pray because in those moments you can go very deep into your heart. You can sink deep into your consciousness, your existence. Or else you can brood over it and keep yourself in a very unhappy situation, worrying about it, feeling sad about it.

If you can turn every helpless moment into a moment of prayer, I tell you, you will never face unpleasant moments in your life. If you're intelligent enough to recognize your insignificance, every moment will be a prayerful moment and in every moment becoming a prayerful moment, your whole life dawns - unconditional joy dawns in you, God dawns in your life, in your mind. So simple!

The first and foremost qualification for prayer is to feel your insignificance, to be aware of your insignificance in this world, to give a wider context to your life. You may think you are doing things in your life. What is it that you are doing? You may think you have planned your life. What is it you have planned? It's like the story of the lizard. A lizard came to invite another lizard to go for a walk. The second lizard said, "Oh, how can I move from here? I am holding the roof. If I move, the roof will fall off". We are no better than that. The lizard may appear to be very stupid. So are we. We think we are holding the whole thing up, holding it together.

What have you achieved in your life? Where are you today? You may be a doctor or engineer, a professor, whatever. What did you do to become what you are today? Very honestly, make sincere inquiry into the events of your life. You became an engineer or a doctor or a professor or whatever you are when several things fell into place, didn't you? All the events fell into place and made you what you are now.

Now see whether you have achieved something every time you made an effort. Many times you have put forth your effort, a one-hundred-percent effort, and still you have failed, haven't you? And how many times when you have not put forth any effort, did you not fail,

but simply passed through the situation?

There must be a limit to ego. You even go to the extent of doing things to satisfy God, to fulfill the gods and goddesses. That is making them a football of your praise and displeasure. You think you are going to please God. God does not want a thing that you have. God doesn't need anything from you.

You think you are offering fruit, flowers, and incense, everything to God in order to please God, taking vows and fasting and participating in ceremonies. By doing all these actions, superficial actions, you think you are pleasing God. That is not prayer and you are afraid that you may earn the displeasure of God. Can you displease God? Is there a way? God isn't going to punish you. There isn't a God sitting up there somewhere on a mountain saying, "I'm going to come and punish you one day, dooms day". He's not going to repay you for your good deeds or bad deeds, giving you reward and punishment.

Nor is prayer demanding from God: God heals me of this; God heals my leg, heals my eyes, and heals my stomach, belly. You violate all the law of nature and then you go to God to get yourself healed. As though God were your own servant you are asking, ordering and you even say, "If you do this thing for me, then I will fulfill this role or do this thing," conditioning the supreme existence, the supreme intelligence. It's impossible. It's all a play of your little mind. Look into all this.

It's nothing great to be atheist. A very stupid person can become an atheist. It doesn't take much to disprove God - you can very easily disprove God. But to prove the existence of supreme intelligence you need intelligence. Only an intelligent man can have faith in God - not just believing, but having faith, which is deeper, which comes from the depth of your heart. When you know, you have faith. When you don't know, then you can only believe. Do you see the difference?

By reading books, by hearing what people say here and there, you may have belief. But faith generates within you. Faith is a happening, and event, a stage of maturity of your knowledge, of your wisdom. When knowledge matures, it becomes faith. Prayer is being in total faith

God knows what to give you. God knows what you need. God is aware of you, totally and if you are aware of that, that is prayer. Don't go to God as a beggar, asking for this small thing, that small thing. We use God as currency; we act as though God is a currency note we can cash in. People go to temples, churches, mosques to gain some little worldly things. People worship and do puja and go to temple so that their business may prosper, so that they may get peace. So your peace you are placing above God. Your peace has become greater to you than God. So you have become greater than God. This ego, this you remains and God is far away.

So prayer is not demanding. Prayer is not asking for something. No. Prayer is gratefulness.

Prayer is being in totality, being aware of the love that God is pouring on you every moment, the huge waves of love that eternity blows on you. You are in deep slumber now, but in this tidal wave, this storm of love, you can't sleep. If you're intelligent, you can't be asleep. God loves you so dearly. Every day and night, God is doing puja to you. God is giving water to you, giving food to you, being a companion to you, giving love in many, many forms. Recognize this. Prayer is recognition of love, recognition of the ocean of love that existence has for you.

265. Life is like a river. You cannot put your feet twice in the same water because the water is changing. Like the flow of a river, your mind is changing all the time. You don't get the same leaves in the maple tree for two seasons. What leaves you see in the maple tree today, next summer the leaves are different. Remember that the same is with your mind. Don't hold on to whatever happened to you in the past. That person is dead and gone. You are a new person. The past is gone because that was all out of ignorance. Now, you are in a different plane of existence, you are on a different level. Recognize it, honor it. Move on.

266. "Master is a doorway. Looking through the doorway, there is no fear. You will look at the world without any fear. You will be in all relationships with everybody without any fear. Because there is shelter".

267. Dear Gurudev, I love singing bhajans, but sometimes I feel I am being very superficial and just treating them like nice music. How can I discover the real devotion when I sing?

Sri Sri: Just be natural and don't worry about your feelings. Feelings keep changing.

If you have had devotion and if it is not coming up the next day, you can't force it to come. Even that devotion is a gift. You can't demand a gift. When it rises up, just be grateful. If it does not show up and you feel like a rock, then just have patience. This is a passing phase. A time in life comes when you feel such flatness. You feel devoid of any emotion, without any commitment. Like this, a stagnant state may step in, but it is only for a short time.

We don't mind when such moments come in life. We don't say, 'No, I must feel very devotional today'.

Think it is like one of those cloudy days and wait for the sunshine.

268. What do you think is devotion? Just crying and singing? Or running after someone? No. It's the simplest state of your awareness. Remember the state of innocence that you had as a child. When you felt at ease, had sense of belongingness, felt trustful and loved. That is devotion! Knowing that you are dear to God and recognizing that God is also dear to you.

269. In Narad Bhakti Sutras, you have said that all good things have a tax. Do I have to pay for devotion as well?

Sri Sri: Ego is the tax for devotion!

270. Devotion

There are three types of people who come to the Master, the student, the disciple and the devotee

A student goes to a teacher and learns something, gets some information and then he walks out of the School. There is no more information, just like looking at a guide book, like a tourist guide.

Then there is the disciple; the disciple follows the example of the Master. But a disciple is with the Master for the sake of learning wisdom, for the sake of improving his life, for the sake of attaining enlightenment. He has a purpose, a cause, so he is not just collecting information, but he goes a little deeper. He is trying to bring a transformation in his life. He wants to make sense out of his life. That is a disciple

And then there is devotee. A devotee is not there even for wisdom. He is simply rejoicing in love. He has fallen in deep love with the Master, with the Infinity, with the God. He doesn't care as to whether he gets enlightened or not. He doesn't care as to whether he acquires a lot of knowledge or wisdom or not. But that very moment, and every moment, he is immersed in divine love that is enough for him or her.

Students are in abundance, disciples are a few, but the devotees are rare. A devotee is very rare to find.

It is nothing great to become God or be God. Whether you want or not, all are already God. A stone is also a God. Where the devotion has flowered totally, the flower has blossomed, that is a devotee. Attraction is everywhere, love is somewhere, but devotion is again rare. Devotion is very beautiful.

A student comes to a Master, Teacher, and Guru with tears in his eyes. There are so many problems, and when he leaves, he is carrying the same tears, but the quality of the tears is different, it is of gratitude. Still tears flow, but those are of gratitude, of love; it is so beautiful to cry in love. One, who has cried even once in love, knows the taste of it, of surrender and of devotion and the entire creation rejoices it.

The entire creation is longing for only one thing, the transformed tears, from salty tears to sweet tears.

One of Buddha's disciples named Sariputra got enlightened. When he got enlightened, Buddha told him, "Now you go ahead, go into the world and preach, teach and do the same work I do, carry on my work". Now Sariputra left Buddha, but he was crying and crying and people asked him, "Why are you crying when you are enlightened?" He said, "Who cares about this enlightenment, it could have waited, I would have waited. I didn't even bother about it or asked for it because the joy of being at the feet of Buddha was so great. Being a devotee was so great, now I am missing this, I would have preferred that to this enlightenment".

There once was a Zen Master who always thought that he was enlightened. He went around saying, "I am enlightened". He happened to meet one of his Masters who gave him a puzzle, called 'koan'. The 'koan' was "the statue has eyes, the tears roll down silently". Hearing this Zen Master was shaken and he said, "There is some depth in it".

Like fatherhood and motherhood, there is Guru-hood. We all have to play Guru-hood at least to somebody. We do play! Consciously or unconsciously you are all Guru to somebody. You keep giving advices and guiding people, giving them loving care! You all do this, but do it 100%, without expecting anything in return: that is living the Guru principle. There is no difference between the divine, the Self and the Guru. They are all one. Meditation is relaxing and reposing. Think of all the things to be grateful for and ask what you want for the future and bless everyone. We receive so many blessings and we should also bless all those who are in need.

Devotion is a gift, you can't take mileage out of it, and you shouldn't. If you take, then that is the way we start slipping out of meditation and out of devotion. Feel grateful for being devoted. Be like a child and let go.

Devotion is a gift. You can't take credit for your own devotion. You can't say, 'I'm so devoted'. You can't take any credit. If you are so devoted it is a gift; such a blessing.

What does devotion do? Devotion gives you immense happiness and pleasure to you, deep love and Siddhis. Siddhi means what you think happens and what you want happens, you bless somebody and it happens; all this happen through that state of your being. The impression of devotion wipes away all other impressions from mind. Devotion is the state of our being.

Devotion is like a diamond; don't trade it for anything that is muddy. A diamond should never be traded for a cup of mud.

Do you know where you tend to lose your devotion? Doing something that is related to temporary things, fighting with somebody, wanting something, like wanting a job, or your relationship doesn't work then your devotion suffers.

You lose your job and your devotion suffers. If somebody blames you then your devotion is

gone. If your work does not happen then your devotion is gone. So we are losing our devotion over a few dollars or over small things. A little fight with somebody and you feel all your devotion is gone. Isn't it?

It is the small things and small little desires where we lose devotion, and it is not worth losing. Isn't it?

See, if you are a medical professional, you give medicine to people, and most of the time it works but sometimes it does not work. It depends on many things. It depends on karma. Similarly in your life many things happen and some things don't happen, but at least hold onto the devotion. Again I am saying, sometimes it appears to have gone or going away, then also you can't do anything about it. Just relax and pray for it.

If you are conscious of this, just be like a child and let go. If you are devoted, feel grateful for being devoted, then that is a safe track. Then the devotion grows every moment. Feel grateful for being devoted. Be like a child and let go.

See, in action there is never perfection. In any great act you will always find 1% flaw. Nature is like that. Any action however good it is, however beneficial it is, there will be a little bit of imperfection in it. Samadhi becomes perfected with devotion.

Now if you think, 'Oh, I don't feel the devotion, what do I do?' Do nothing, just relax! Don't think you don't have it. You have it, it has not manifested now, but it will. A little more merit, do some seva and some good things and then it will manifest. Be in knowledge and it will come up.

Also the astrological situation has an impact on devotion in the beginning, for beginners. When a particular planet's conjunction happens, at that time, the first thing that happens is devotion goes into the background. So when the Jupiter planet comes in the eighth houses it is called Ashtama Guru. It is said that the pundits know that the person is going through Ashtama Guru, and he is going to go through turmoil for that one year.

What will happen then? The mind goes all over the place, mind is in turmoil, every decision is wrong, anything he does becomes hopeless, and moreover he loses all interest in spirituality. It happens once every 12 years. It can be for two months, six months or a maximum for one year.

For two months it will be intense, or for four months or six months. So when someone knows, 'Oh this is my Ashtama Guru that is why my mind is like that', then you have diagnosed the disease and you know why your mind is going like that.

If you don't know, then you think, 'Oh, I have wasted my whole life. Why did I do pranayama, why I did I do all these things. It is all a waste', this is what happens and you stop doing everything. After one year's time, then you realize, 'Oh my God, I did a blunder,

where did my mind go'. You think that way.

Astrologers know and the people know in India, what you call sadesati, seven and a half years of Saturn. At that time people really lose all their material relationships, material wealth and for some people it is a very hard time. Health and all these concerns come if someone is only outward.

But if someone is spiritual then that same situation will make them so much better. It depends on how the person is. You must have heard people around saying, 'Oh, for seven years nothing is working for me. I try but everything is a flop'. This happens in the Saturn's seven and half years that comes once in every 30 years. So it comes only twice in a lifetime, not too often. But that is good enough to shake a person; fry somebody.

Usually if it comes when a person is a child, within 15 to 20 years of age, it doesn't have much impact, but only in the middle age it has an impact. But if it comes to somebody after they are 50 years, then also there is not much of an impact.

So this period of seven and half years also brings turmoil. In a way it makes a person turn inward. If you have noticed, those of you who came on the spiritual path, you came because there was some crisis. How many of you came because of crisis? This is what Saturn does. It creates a situation so that you get so fed up of the outside and you turn inside. In that way it is very good.

But Ashtama Guru that comes once in every 12 years is when faith is shaken. You even wonder whether there is a God or not. Nothing appears worthwhile. Everything appears tasteless and directionless, and feelings of boredom and confusion get generated. But that is for a short time and the moment you are in satsang, that moment the mind gets uplifted. All this gets cleared. That is why in the Guru's presence or in satsang, or in sadhana, these planetary effects are minimum. It just does not affect you so much. People experience this over and over again, so many times.

That is why these traditions are such. The way they have put together, it is so amazing, and it is amazing how the tradition is kept and knowledge is maintained.

How to have devotion? You assume that you have devotion. Don't strive to have devotion. We should assume that we have love and devotion in us. When you believe in this, the devotion in you enhances. When you think you don't have devotion at all, it wouldn't manifest.

Open your ears wide and listen. You are a devotee and a true devotee. Don't ever raise a doubt on this. The badness is imposed from outside. Inside you are one with the Truth. Your devotion is also true devotion. This is the way to think. Otherwise, the self doubt transforms into guilt and then you spoil your mind. Move with the belief that I am a true devotee. Hear this with open ears.

271. "Satsang doesn't mean you sit everyday and you sing. Satsang also means you sit and introspect what did I do today? How much further did I reach today? Today what good things did I imbibe and what are the bad things. Then leave it and see what new knowledge is for the day. This is satsang. To participate and taking everyone along. This is satsang. Acknowledging your mistakes and surrendering them.

What is the truth of life, looking into that? The main thing is getting rid of attachments. I want this, and this and why these attachments? Because of lack of knowledge. Not knowing that you will get what you need. 'Dene wala chhappar phad ked deta hai'. The One Giver always gives in abundance.

If you don't have this faith then there will be fear. If there is fear, then there will be attachment. If there is attachment, then there will be envy. If there is envy there will be jealousy. One follows the other. It is not easy to cross over all this. But yes, it is not impossible either! Look back and see, five or two years back, have you not changed? If yes, then you are on the right track. Then be happy, don't fall into guilt. Guilt is as bad as self-praise. So choose the middle path".

"You know you should just drop your question in the question basket. If you keep one question, you lose all other knowledge. Like when you set out to buy salt and that is all that you are focussed on, then if someone brings a diamond to you, will not take that. So keep your mind so open that if a diamond comes your way, you take a diamond and if salt comes your way, you take salt. So keep your mind empty and sit.

Many times, you keep a question in your mind and it automatically gets answered. How many of you have experienced this? (Many raise their hands) You ask a question in your mind and it gets answered, you don't even need to ask it. This relationship should be established. This is the Guru Shishya Parampara. You will get what you need, you don't even need to ask for it. You are set to ask a question, then it becomes an impediment in receiving other things".

272. I'm appalled by the pettiness and jealousy in me.

Sri Sri: Good at least you have at least you have come to this realization. Now drop all that and you leave it to me and be free. Too much self analysis is also not good, and no self analysis is also not good. You should analyse, understand, then drop and move forward.

There are two positions, those who never analyse themselves. They always look at others, whether they are right or wrong, always judging others. They never introspect. This is absolutely bad. This is the way to go down and there are other people who only analyze themselves all the time. That is equally bad. So we need that middle path. You analyse, drop and move on. When you see that tendency is coming in, the moment you are aware of it, it is already gone.

The more consciousness expands, your mind expands, the more you get into knowledge, more dispassion comes into you, automatically inner decoration will happen. Dispassion is the only cleansing thing. This is very important. Realizing this all ephemeral, this will all change and nothing is permanent.

273. If one faces failure in some task again and again, should I continue to do the same, or should I drop that?

Sri Sri: There is one proverb in India, "Task gets accomplished with the Sattva and not with the material". So, in order to get something done, sattogun should rise and what does one do to increase Sattogun? With right food, right conduct, and relaxing your mind for some time - This is first.

Secondly, even if you face failure in spite of that, sattogun doesn't let your enthusiasm to shatter, and when that driving force is still there, you don't even think of dropping. Like if gambler wins once, he develops that taste to win and then he continues to play again and again with the wish to win, and even when some failure is encountered, he doesn't even think of dropping in between.

Even during some failure, that strong conviction of achieving some good is there, and this conviction will be there when you have that dedication for the task. Like, with enthusiasm in action and peace in heart, people kept fighting for freedom for two centuries.

The ones who were fighting for freedom, they didn't get any money, they didn't steal anything, but did they leave the drive?

And third factor, look for the reason of failure. Every failure is a step towards success. One reason can be some weakness in oneself or some weak point in the system, arrangements. Self-weakness – like someone is not able to present the work properly. E.g. if you go for interview, and say some words here and there, then interviewer develops a doubt if you would be able to do that or not. So, one doesn't get job because of one's weakness. To get rid of one's weakness, enhance your abilities.

Each failure is a step towards success, so analyze what did you learn out of this? Did you flow with the emotions? You didn't consult those who are already into that profession? You didn't trust them, or you didn't keep faithful people with you. All these reasons could be there. So, to get rid of any weakness, enhance your ability, and go into the depth of knowledge of the field in which you wish to move ahead.

Second is to amend the system or arrangements. Now, this is not in hands of a single person. Like if corruption is to be checked, can you fight alone? Be with the group. Awaken that intelligence in people for that. Get people to move ahead with you. "Sanghe Shakti Kaliyuge".

In kalyuga, the power is in the team. People say that it is the peak of kalyuga, and it is as if truth has taken a backseat. If you feel like that, then work in a team. Take some people along and then see if the task gets accomplished or not. To enhance capability, you would have to do something yourself, go within yourself. Be in the world to get more people along, and be with yourself to gain abilities. Taking along both the fields, you will definitely get success in your tasks. If you have given all your trials, put in your 100 percent and if, even then, you didn't get success, and then it is ok. Take some other work in your hands. But don't run away if you face failure for the first or second time.

274. Krishna is the epitome of joy, the quintessence of simplicity and the very source of love. Devaki's and Vasudev's imprisonment by Kans signifies that when the ego takes over, the body feels like a prison. When Krishna was born, the prison guards fell asleep. The guards here are the senses, which protect the ego because they are turned outward when awake. Inner joy sprouts in us when the senses turn inwards.

Krishna is also known as the butter thief. Milk is the essence of nourishment and curd is a cultured form of milk. When curd is churned, butter comes up and floats on top. It is nourishing and yet light, not heavy. When our intelligence is churned, it becomes like butter. When knowledge dawns in the mind, one gets established in one's Self. Such a person remains unattached to this world and his mind does not sink in it. Krishna stealing butter is a symbolism depicting the glory of love. So attractive is Krishna's charm and skill that he steals the minds of even the most dispassionate.

275. Sankalpa is a thought or wish, with which there is no feverishness attached. When you desire without feverishness for something, then it becomes a Sankalpa.

276. Three Doshas of Body

Ayurveda

Health is not mere absence of disease. It is the dynamic expression of life".

Life has four characteristics: it exists, evolves, expresses and extinguishes and for these, it depends on five elements: the earth, water, air, ether and fire. These correspond to the five senses: sight, smell, taste, sound and touch.

Ayurveda is the study of life — Veda means 'to know' and Ayur is 'life'.

According to Ayurveda, life or existence is not rigid compartments — it is a harmonious flow. Even the five elements are not tight compartments of defined objects — they flow into one another. Each one of the elements contains the other four. So, the approach of Ayurveda

towards life is holistic.

Our body type, moods, traits and qualities are determined by what Ayurveda calls, our prakruti. According to Ayurveda, our basic constitution, called Prakruti, is determined at the time of conception and remains constant over our lifetime.

Prakruti is governed by the three life forces called doshas namely Vata, Pitta and Kapha which control the activities of the body.

It is important to understand that though our body contains all the doshas, it is the one that is predominant that decides our prakruti. A person's chances of developing certain types of diseases are related to the way these three doshas are imbalanced.

"The subtlest in us is space element, of which the mind is made of, and the grossest is the earth element, which makes our bones, marrow, skin and the structure. These are divided into the three doshas – Vata, Pitta and Kapha".

The five elements of the universe – Earth, Fire, Air, Space and Water, are the components of the three doshas.

When an illness arises, it manifests first in the thought form, which is the subtlest aspect, and then in the sound form. Thereafter it manifests in the light form, that is, in the aura. It is only then that the illness manifests itself in the body.

To begin with, simple symptoms arise in the fluid form, which can be eradicated, and then only they manifest in the grossest form, where they need medication. In aromatherapy, an illness can be cured just through fragrance. It is mostly focussed on the preventive aspect.

The holistic approach of Ayurveda includes exercising, breathing and meditation. Breath is synonymous to life. For all practical purposes, if someone is not breathing, that's the sign that there is no life there. It is very interesting to notice the relationship between breath and the three Doshas in the body. These Doshas affect certain parts of the body more than the others.

For example, Vata Dosha is predominant in the lower part of the body — stomach, intestine etc. Diseases like gastric problems and joint aches are caused due to this.

Kapha Dosha is predominant in the middle part of the body. Cough is mainly a result of Kapha imbalance.

Pitta affects the upper part of the body i.e., the head — short temper is a sign of Pitta.

Characteristics of three Doshas:

VATA (Space and Air combine)

Traits: Thin body frame, vibrant, enthusiastic, hyperactive, imaginative, sensitive, extroverted, variable grasping power and memory.

Must Have: All sweet fruits, fresh dates, banana, mangoes, raisins, lentils, moong-beans, soya, oils like sesame, olive, sunflower, peanut, milk, fresh cheese, butter and ghee.

Avoid: Dry fruits, junk food, cold and frozen fruit, kidney beans, gram and peas.

PITTA (Fire and Water combine)

Traits: Moderate body type, active, short-tempered, creative, caring, like challenges, good managerial skills and leadership qualities, good digestion and concentration, courageous, intellectual, fast thinkers.

Must Have: All sweet fruits like apple, figs, dates, pomegranate, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, leafy greens, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, radish, sprouts, buttermilk, milk, ghee, curd, coconut, nuts which are soaked in water.

Avoid: Too much heat or sun exposure, hot spicy junk food, deep fried, sour and fermented food.

KAPHA (Water and Earth combine)

Traits: Heavy body type, cool, lazy, sensitive, calm and relaxed, emotionally stable, good memory, extrovert, methodical, natural resistance to illnesses.

Must Have: All fruits can be taken in less amount, all green leafy vegetables, sprouts, carrot, radish, barley, ragi, corn, buttermilk, soya and goat milk, olive oil, nuts (2-3), sunflower and flax seeds.

Avoid: Sweets, milk products (except buttermilk and milk), cakes, chocolates, pastries and aerated drinks.

Appropriate knowledge of one's prakruti helps in prevention and treatment of diseases. This can be determined with the ancient technique of 'Nadi Parikshana' – literally meaning – checking the patient's pulse. Yoga or breathing techniques like Sudarshan Kriya. In, the three stage pranayama has effect on these three Doshas. Among different breathing techniques, there are specific breathing exercises for lower, middle and upper parts of the body. After the three-stage pranayama, you would feel that the Doshas in your body have altered. Something in the body changes; you no longer feel the same, you feel more balanced.

The pranayama brings that balance in the system. Once you get in the rhythm of the pranayama, you will find the balance setting in. Making it a habit is difficult, but not the practice itself. Definite rhythms or breathing patterns correct these Doshas and bring the balance to the connected parts of the body.

You can also find the three Doshas in our fingers and the nerve endings. For example, the index finger is Kapha; the middle finger is Vata, and the ring finger is Pitta. You can discern the Doshas running in the body by the shape of someone's fingers. Practice of Mudra pranayamas, i.e., gently pressing the nerve endings in the fingertips in a subtle way and breathing with the Ujjayi breath, also balances the Doshas in the body.

It is said, when there is food in the stomach (undigested food) indigestion happens and it creates 'Ama'. The ama harbors the bacteria. Shastras say as soon as you get up in the morning if you have a sour burp it is sin. The sour burp in early morning indicates indigestion; ama has collected in the body. Sooner or later it is going to affect your brain, your thinking! You are going to say everything in the negative light. Someone comes to you to greet because they got some promotion or say they got a lottery you will immediately say: look, they have come to show off! A good gesture may be interpreted wrongly. Why? Because our thinking process has been affected.

How did it get affected? Bad food! The Jain dharma has done a lot of research about food: what to eat, how to eat, which food will create ahimsa, which food will create himsa and so on. So 'ahara' and 'vyavahara' they are connected. So not to eat too late in the night. In the morning drink plenty of water.

How to bring good health to a system?

First, attend to that is the MIND element, coming from the subtlest aspect of creation, the ether. If your mind is clogged with too many impressions and thoughts, it is draining you of your resistance power and is preparing your body for some illness. If the mind is clear, calm, meditative and pleasant, the resistance in the body increases. It would not allow an illness to come into the body. Thus, the first remedy is to calm down the mind, provided by the ether.

Then come to the AIR element, the breathing. Aromatherapy depends on this element and then light — the colour therapy. You can see an illness in the aura of a person before it manifests in the body. Some physicians have done research on the aura photography, especially in cases of ulcers, cancer and diabetes. They took photographs six months before these diseases could manifest in the body and found some spots. By energising our system with the prana — life energy or breath — you can clear the aura and prevent the illness before it comes.

That is what yoga does. Patanjali, in the Yoga Sutras, says that the purpose of yoga is, "Stopping the sorrow before it arises".

And then, come to the WATER element. Fasting with water, purifying the system with water can bring a balance in the system.

And final recourse, of course, is different medicinal herbs, medicines and surgery. All these come when everything else fails or when we neglect these other steps; then it becomes inevitable. The practice of Ayurveda can truly enhance the quality of your life.

Our breath has a lot of secrets to offer to us, because for every emotion in the mind, there is corresponding rhythm in the breath and each rhythm affects certain part of the body physically. Observing the great correlation between these sensations, the level of body and moods of the mind is meditation.

Have you observed the sensation you experience when someone praises you? Or, when you feel happy looking at a sunset or is meeting someone very close and dear to you? You feel a sense of expansion of mind, of consciousness. Though we do feel that happiness and the sensation is happening, we fail to notice the connection. It is because our attention is on that object, not on the sensation and when you are miserable, there is a sensation of contraction. Somewhere you feel tight and tense inside; there is a contraction of the consciousness — that's misery, sorrow.

Knowledge is, knowing that what expands. What is that something in this body which is expanding and contracting, which is feeling happy or feeling miserable, which is expressing and which is experiencing, which is evolving and which is moving through the events? This knowledge, this enquiry is the study of consciousness, of life, of prana, of Ayurveda.

One of the acharyas of Ayurveda has said, "Rase sidhe karishyami nirdaridryam idam jagath which means "I am giving this knowledge of Ayurveda to take away suffering from the world". So, the approach of Ayurveda towards life is wholistic.

Gita tells us about food. "Pranapana samayukta" and also about breath & pranayama. If mind is aggressive, do some pranayama, and then mind calms down. A few ujjai breath (Guruji demonstrates bringing that sound) – breathing from back of your throat. Many of the mental illnesses will calm down, aggressiveness calms down.

Have you ever counted how many times you breathe in a minute? Breathing is the first act of life and this is also the last act of life. In between, though we are breathing in and out forever, we do not attend to the breath. If you attend to the breath, you'll find that in one minute we breathe nearly sixteen to seventeen times. If you are upset you may go up to twenty; if you are extremely tense and angry, maybe twenty-five breaths per minute. But if you are calm, pleasant and happy, you will breathe ten times; and if you are in deep meditation, then only two breaths or three.

Ninety percent of the impurities in the body go out through the breath because we are breathing twenty-four hours a day. However, we are using only thirty percent of our lung

capacity. We are not breathing enough. See, the mind is like a kite and the breath is like a thread. For the mind to go high the breath needs to be longer. You don't have to take Prozac if you can attend to the breath.

If you observe an infant and its breathing pattern, you will be amazed how balanced it breathes. Infants breathe from all the three sections of the body. Their breath goes very deep, and as they breathe in, their belly comes out; as they breathe out their belly moves in. But more nervous and tense you are, you will do the reverse. You don't have to go to a school or learn these things from anybody. If your mind is very keen and observant, then you learn a lot just observing people, children and the nature around. But our mind is preoccupied with so many things, judgements, opinions and impressions that we are unable to observe and perceive the refined things in nature.

So we need to study. The yoga asanas are something, which everyone has done as a child. Have you seen a six-month-old baby lying on its back with its legs up? And it kicks its legs and head also up, almost like what you do with the ebb (abdominal) machine. Then it goes on its back and does the 'cobra' posture in yoga and if you observe a sleeping child, its thumb and the index finger slightly touch a formation which is the 'Chin mudra' or go to a zoo and observe the monkeys. Even they do many of the asanas to keep themselves healthy. So these are the things that coordinate body, breath, mind and spirit and Ayurveda attends to this holistic approach.

There are so many points in the body, which correspond with different sensations, but these are reflections of something, which is beyond all this. What is that something? That is the source of life.

277. Gurudev, how do I let go of the past?

Sri Sri: We must always see the past as destiny, future as free will and live happily in the present moment. We do the other way round, what we do? We think the past was free will and the future is all destinies, and you remain in the present inactive and miserable, this is what foolish people do. What do intelligent people do?

The intelligent people see the past as it is gone, done, finished and that was meant to be, it was destiny. Something good has happened and you have learnt something, and something bad has happened and you have learnt. Both ways you have learnt, so past is destiny. We can create future now; our spirit has the capacity to see what we want. Future is free will, we are happy and one with everybody in the present. We should find every reason to be happy but what we do, we do the other way round, we find every reason to be unhappy.

Yeah of course challenges come in life, pleasant things happen; unpleasant things happen so what, huh!

278. This world is also called maya, what is paap, punya?

Sri Sri: All this is maya, and then you will be free of it. Just wake up. When you wake up then whatever happened in dream is vanished, you will anyways come out of it. If someone abuse you in dream, so when you wake up you don't go to find that person where is he, right?

279. What is nothingness filled with? Is it full of life and awareness?

Sri Sri: Nothingness is filled with energy. This is again quantum physics. They say, the empty space that you see around the Sun is not empty. In fact, the Sun is round because the energy surrounding it pushing it from all the four sides and making it round.

It is like a bubble in a water bottle. How is a bubble round? The pressure of the water keeps the bubble round. In the same way, the Sun is round because the energy around the Sun is one million times more than denser than the Sun's. This energy is called dark energy or dark matter.

So the space around the Sun is all filled with energy.

280. Our horoscope is based on our birth time. If the birth time is unknown, does that mean our horoscope is wrong?

Sri Sri: If the timing is correct, interpretation is right. You can never say that it is 100% right. There is a probability of it being 80%-90% correct and there is always an *adrushya* (invisible), i.e., an unknown influence. It can happen anytime and that is what is called grace. So grace has the ability to change anything at anytime.

281. Which is higher, Moksha or Devotion?

Sri Sri: When you do not want pleasure, when you do not care for pleasure then you get Moksha. What is Moksha? Freedom from misery. Misery is bondage. To be free from bondage is natural for humans. In fact not just humans, for anyone. If you tie-up a dog even the dog will want freedom from bondage, will want to break away from the chain. This is natural. Nobody wants bondage. To want Moksha is natural and those who do not even care for Moksha, they attain Devotion. Devotion is a special kind of bondage. It is bondage with infinity. Bondage with the loved one that is Devotion.

282. What is difference between Saguna and Nirguna Devotion?

Sri Sri: You start with Saguna devotion and reach Nirguna devotion. Saguna devotion is love for parents, Guru etc after doing all this when the mind becomes quiet and peaceful and you go into Samadhi, and then that is Nirguna devotion.

283. What is higher than fulfillment?

Sri Sri: Fulfillment is the highest. What is higher than that? You are.

284. Importance of Mantra's

Mantra's are like seeds. A seed needs to be simply sown. You don't open the seed and analyse the seed. A fruit you open and you enjoy the fruit. But when there is a seed you don't open and dissect the seed. You simply put it in the soil and close it. That is why mantras are called 'beejas' (seeds). They are the seeds of creation. It is the sound that is more important.

The vibrations of the mantras are more important than the meaning. One sound may have many meanings in different parts of the world. But the vibration of the sound is the same. Mantras have vibrations, which are universal. The vibration of the mantra, which transcends the meaning, has an impact on consciousness and that is universal. So it's not so important to hold on to the meaning. Though it has some meaning on some level, but at a deeper level, the impact of it is what is most important.

285. A few people show too much, too much faith, too much respect. I wonder if there is something wrong with them or with me.

Sri Sri: What I would like to tell you is, stop judging others. Don't look at others. Look at yourself. There are many different people, they express their feelings differently and there are no need to have uniformity there. So everyone is free to express the way that they want to.

286. How to drop doership?

Sri Sri: You just have to wake up and see. It's a matter of awareness. Just become aware that everything is happening. That's it. Thoughts are coming into my mind. I'm not bringing in the thoughts. Good thoughts, bad thoughts are simply coming into my mind and at that moment when you realize they are all coming, you are not making them come you realize, this is it. Then you pray may good thoughts come, may the divinity give me good thoughts.

Let the divinity purify my intellect. Prayers are the answer.

287. What are Maha Vakyas?

Sri Sri: Maha means great, vakya means sentences. Great sentences and one of the great sentences is 'Thou are that', you are that. That which is you are seeking, that is what you are. God is not somewhere there in the temples, mosques or church. God is where you are, in your heart. The divinity is right in your heart. That is the greatest sentence and all this is Divine. That is another great sentence. "Sarvam khalvidam brahma". All this is Brahma. There are four such great sentences. At different levels of evolution, you are given different knowledge, these sentences, for you to recognize that which is already there.

288. What can I do to win your heart? I go around and run after you, but still you don't look at me. What am I supposed to do to get your attention?

Sri Sri: You think I don't look at you. That is not the case. But you don't have to run after me. Just be where you are. I am right there with you.

289. Anger is weapon and weakness too. How do we stop it from becoming a weakness?

Sri Sri: Do you know why we get angry? Because of some weakness in us. We want to do something and are not able to do it that makes us angry. If we are capable then why should we get angry? Nobody gets angry with an ant or a fly. We never get angry on someone who is smaller than us. We only get angry with those whom we think are bigger than us, on that which we think is beyond our capability.

If we feel that somebody is not listening to us then we get angry. That anger which we actually experience causes us trouble. But sometimes we just show anger, and that is necessary sometimes. That anger we use as a weapon. You show anger, but without getting disturbed on the inside, without blood pressure increasing, without our head bursting, without getting heated up.

Mothers show anger to their children everyday but at the same time they smile at their husbands. These days it can be opposite too! But they don't lose sleep over this anger. So the anger, which is for show, is ok, it is for someone who does not listen after saying something many times. Showing anger for someone's benefit is good but anger for your own selfish reasons harms oneself. Getting angry because you are getting disrespected is harmful.

290. You have said that affirmations are not very useful for a Sadhak (seeker). "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman), "Soham" (I am that) also seem to be affirmations. Then how are they different from affirmations?

Sri Sri: See you are in Bangalore, you know it, and then you don't need to repeat it. Who would repeat it? The one who is in doubt. If you think you are in Chennai or Delhi then you have to repeat "No, I am in Bangalore, I am in Bangalore". Right? Once you got the point then you don't repeat it. Do you repeat your name? You know who you are. These affirmations in some subtle way, puts a doubt in you to the contrary. That is why say I say no need of those affirmations. It's ok if you want to use it there is no big harm in it, but it is not all that life transforming as you may expect it to be.

291. Please tell us which is the best place to put our heads when we sleep (North, South, East or West)?

Sri Sri: Put your head on the pillow! (Laughter). North has a magnetic pole, so if you put your head in the North and sleep North-South then the magnetic current that flows from North to South passes through your head to your toes. It can be tiring and drain the energy a little bit. This is an ancient thought.

You always sleep East-West so that you cut the magnetic field and let it pass through your whole body horizontally and not through the nervous system. That is a very minor issue, nothing major. It has only to do with the magnetic current.

292. Are you Krishna or Buddha? Were you born enlightened or did you get it through self effort like Buddha? Please don't say I am both or neither!

Sri Sri: You want the answer to be exactly what you want? (Laughter) Whatever I am, you first decide who you are. What do you want to become, who are you, decide that first. I am now what I have always been.

293. Even after doing Sadhana, seva and stasang I get negative thoughts, I am fearful and feel small in front of others. Please tell me what to do.

Sri Sri: If negative thoughts come, let them. They will go away. If you pick up the mat and clean the floor, then it is obvious that dust will fly! If put the mat down and don't clean because of the dust then what will happen? The dirt will remain there. Whatever is negativity is coming, it coming for it to be released. Don't be fearful of negative thoughts. Increase your self-confidence by thinking that God belongs to me or my Soul has the capability or strength and that you are above all this.

294. In tough times I get very feverish and very disturbed.

Sri Sri: Now when that happens you can't do anything about it. You will eventually get over it. In life there will be times, when such situations will capture your mind. Your mind gets caught in storm. But know this that this storm will pass and everything will become calm again. The clouds are not in your control, in the same way tensions and worries come in your life. But they come for a short while, they will pass.

In every two and a half days, the state of mind changes. So even if you are disturbed, it will stay in that state for only two and half days and dispassion helps at this point. Knowing that in the end, you will drop this body and all this will end one day. This will free you from all the unpleasant sensations in your mind and body.

295. How to control mind?

Sri Sri: Why do you want to control the mind?

The mind always goes where it finds more happiness and more joy. Let it go!

You will find that real joy is not outside, it is inside. The mind will go everywhere outside, and when it doesn't find joy, it will finally go in, spontaneously.

Where there is love, you don't need to try to control the mind. Where there is interest, you don't need to control the mind. Do you have to make an effort to love your child? No! Love for children is so spontaneous, so natural.

In the same way, when everything appears empty, the mind will go to that higher knowledge, wisdom, and energy. It is quite natural.

296. How do I live with a husband who is a mama's boy? How and when does a man switch from being a devoted son to also being a husband and a father?

Sri Sri: See this from a long-term perspective. What would you like your son to be? Do you want your son, as soon as he gets married, to be only a good husband and good father and stop being a good son? This is a question in front of you. If you answer this question you will get an answer for your question also.

Nothing stops someone from being a good husband and a good father; he just needs a little orientation. May be it's such a new role for him and he has not yet adjusted to the new role. With patience, educate him and don't ask him not to listen to their mother. This could be a way. Sometimes people buy new cars and they don't know how to drive it very well. If there are too many gadgets and too many buttons they look around in order to get oriented with

the car.

Often mothers feel very insecure the moment their children, daughter or son get married. So they need some reassurance that everything will be as usual. This could be one issue. Secondly, one person can play all roles devotedly without getting into conflict. This is a skill, and one can get this skill when one is free from stress and has good support. So after sometime a wife should also treat the husband like a son, in the sense she has to have a lot of patience. How much patience you have till your child starts learning, that much patience you need to have.

A child teaches a mother lot of patience because she has to teach him how to brush his teeth, how to wash himself, how to use the toilet, how to eat, how to wash his hands, everything she has to teach him. How much patience you have had with your child, so you keep at least 50% of that patience with your husband.

297. Taking responsibility without doership or surrendering is the skill of the wise. This skill is the grace of the Guru.

298. I keep on asking the Divine for something or the other all the time. I don't like this sometimes.

Sri Sri: When you get something after asking, your faith gets developed and then even without asking you get what you need.

299. What to do when suddenly one experiences a state of emptiness? What to do when all meanings fade away? Please bless me!

Sri Sri: Yes, bless you! All these feelings and emotions come and go. Sometimes you feel so dry like everything has disappeared. All your good feelings: love, dedication suddenly goes away; but suddenly they appear too. So these are just passing phases in life, just keep moving on.

300. I don't speak out my problems to you. Should I be more vocal or are my silent prayers enough?

Sri Sri: As long as things are happening and you don't feel like verbalizing, it's fine. There is no need that you must speak out. Many times you feel lighter when you speak out.

301. Is there a scientific explanation to Vibhuti and other rings etc?

Sri Sri: This is nothing. It is just a technique. What is much more important than that is to bring a change in the mind, change in one's life.

302. When and how can we attain complete control in the five senses? Is total dispassion possible?

Sri Sri: Your experience shows, the maturity. You don't need to exercise control, your maturity. You didn't make any effort in leaving cotton candies and lollipops. As you grew up your desire for lollipops vanished. Craving for sugar, for company, a friend is there in young people. When you grow older you don't crave for it as much. So as mind as consciousness matures automatically these things don't interest you. Spontaneously, without any effort.

When the sunlight has come you don't have to put off the candle. Even if the candle is there it is not seen. Candle light has significance only as long as the Sun has not come out. So when inner joy wells up, you don't need to control your senses. It is a spontaneous happening.

303. If men and women are equal, then why does only Lakshmi bow down to Narayana?

Sri Sri: When Lakshmi becomes Durga, then everyone bows down to her. She has to show that she is Durga! Everybody, all Lords, Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara, everyone bows down to Durga.

304. Is it ok to cry or is it a sign of weakness?

Sri Sri: It's ok to cry. No, no, it's not a sign of weakness. Tears come when you are grateful; tears come when you are filled with love, tears come when you are in despair. It's an inbuilt thing in your system. Laughing and crying are two important aspects of human life.

You came into this world crying. If you had not cried, your parents would have cried! And when you leave this world, then also people will cry. If they don't cry then you have not lived a good life. Saint Kabir has said when you came into this world you cried and everyone else smiled. Do such deeds that when you leave this world, you go with smile and everyone else smiles.

305. Do dreams create fresh impression?

Sri Sri: No dreams do not create impressions. They release impressions. There are 5 types of dreams. One type is due past impressions. Second is due to desires and fear. Third is due to the place you are sleeping, the vibrations. Fourth is a premonition, what is going to happen will come to you as a dream and fifth is a mixture of all. Ninety percent is the fifth type of dream. Don't try to analyze your dreams. When you get up, drink water and move on.

306. How can I be more creative?

Sri Sri: Just relax. In the midst of pressure relax. Take few moments to meditate. It'll happen automatically.

307. Is being jealous for the Guru good?

Sri Sri: You can be greedy to do Seva, for higher knowledge. No need to be jealous. Guru keeps all types of people around him. But everybody is happy!

308. I have heard that everyone is enlightened, they have just not realised it. Is it just a realization that's it?

Sri Sri: Yes. See the elephant does know its power. With great love it will just hold your hand and pull you. It doesn't know that it can break your hand! In the same way, we do not realize our inner potential. We feel that we are the body, mind, a little thought, a little emotion you are much beyond this. Enlightenment is simply peeling your layers and becoming hollow and empty. Get to that spot where you feel absolute comfort and absolute freedom. That is Mukti that is Moksha that is enlightenment.

309. Gurudev, there are some prayer rituals that we perform at home to nullify any bad things that are to happen. My question is, will the Divine do bad to us if we do not perform these poojas?

Sri Sri: No, there is nothing like that. The Divine is not going to do anything bad to you, or get angry at you. The purpose of pooja is to keep a good atmosphere, to bring in good energy to your home and to purify your mind and your heart.

If you sit with your eyes closed and go into deep meditation that is good enough! That is the best thing one can do.

There is a beautiful couplet in Kannada, which says, 'When your breath is fragrant, what is the need for flowers?'

When will the breath get fragrant? Only when you are meditating every day. When you are aggressive your breath is hot. When you are obsessed with desires, your breath is shaky and when you have negative feeling and hatred towards something, your, breath smells bad. Negativity makes the breath smell bad.

When your mind is in deep love, very subtle, very peaceful, and contented, your breath has a fragrance. It is a beautiful thing.

What is the need for Samadhi and meditation when there is peace, forgiveness, compassion and patience? If you have all these qualities in you, what is the need of doing meditation? Then no need of Samadhi, you are already in Samadhi.

What is the point of solitude when the whole world is me only? When everything is a part of me then what is the point of going into solitude? You know, people go to Himalayas to find solitude. Why do you want to go there to find solitude! Everybody is part of you, you have become the world, and the world is you. When you get this realization, then you see that there is no need of running away to Himalayas for solitude!

This knowledge is so beautiful, but it is higher knowledge. Don't tell me tomorrow that since you are quite compassionate and forgiving you don't need to go and meditate. Continue your meditate and you'll see that these qualities are already present in you. Then every moment is living serenity.

Some of these are given here – for the benefit of all lovers of Art of Living.

310. Who is the ideal devotee? What quality should an ideal disciple have? Do you differentiate between disciples?

Sri Sri: You, who is asking this question. Don't be too hard on yourself; don't question your devotion. Take it for granted that you are devoted. Sometimes it is covered with ignorance, hesitation, doubts and insecurity. It is only a matter of time for that strip of ignorance and ego to give way and then the inner devotee will shine up.

No child ever asks the mother, 'do you love me?' The mother never asks the child, 'do you love me?'

The baby has no choice but to love the mother and neither the mother has any choice but to love the baby. Similarly devotion is inbuilt in every one of us.

Don't worry so much, just be like a child, and take life with ease. Yes, I differentiate

between disciples and you are very special. Each one of you is unique and each one is special, so everyone is different.

311. Are we following you or are you choosing us?

Sri Sri: With changing times the leader has to be behind the followers, pushing them ahead. Earlier it used to be the leader in the front, but followers were left behind. So now I have changed the strategy! I am pushing my followers ahead!

312. Guruji is there any special message for us?

Sri Sri: Special message is that that you are very special. All of you. When I say you, it is not for any one person but for us. All of you are very special.

313. What is the purpose of satsang?

Sri Sri: The purpose of satsang is laya yoga. When everyone sings with one heart, and sound, then your heart becomes immersed in the sound. It then becomes 'laya yoga' - getting absorbed in the sound. If you become a spectator and just watch, it becomes difficult. You should also sing, and then only the energy in you, the chaitanya will grow.

314. What should be the ultimate desire of our life?

Sri Sri: If somebody tells you what the ultimate desire should be, that's futile. This moment what you need is your desire. When you look at life from a broader perspective, then you yourself come to know what you want. Naturally, you will be compassionate, considerate for your environment, work for the country and keep doing such work and then it will not matter what the ultimate desire is. What this life is all about, you will know that naturally.

315. What is more important happiness or performing one's duty?

Sri Sri: Both. You have to perform your duty and you have to be happy. Why do you want to have a choice between these two? Hmm. If there is a choice, go for duty first because if you are unhappy it may be momentary, right? Happiness is there, will come. But if you are choosing happiness before duty then you will be unhappy in the end. So it's better to be unhappy in the beginning than keep it a long, long program.

316. What should be the goal of human life?

Sri Sri: Why not list what should not be the goal of human life! Like getting miserable, making others unhappy, getting depressed. Negate what is not the goal, then you will arrive at the goal!

317. Even after forgiving, a few individuals give problems, why so?

Sri Sri: Go deep in knowledge. When you forgive, you get benefited. It does not matter, whom you have forgiven. You are the one who will get the benefit. Whether they get benefit or not is something secondary. Be selfish. Save your mind at all cost. See that your mind is free from all the tensions and worries.

318. What distinguishes between good and not good desires?

Sri Sri: You know that which gives you long term joy and short term problem is good, and that which gives you short term joy and long term problem is misery. Just keep this as your criteria that are good enough.

319. If we hurt somebody, what to do?

Sri Sri: This moment you are new. You made mistake when you were foolish. Now you are not that you are new. You were ignorant. Now you move on. Don't repeat it in the future. Surrender your past. Surrender your garbage and everything you can't correct, to your master. Master is a garbage collector. Surrender your garbage to him.

320. Is it necessary to have ambition in life?

Sri Sri: Have a goal. When water is everywhere, it is a flood, but if it is in between banks, it is a river. It is nice to have a goal, so your life force gets channelized!

321. Is it possible to have love without pain?

Sri Sri: When no distortions of love are there, like anger, jealousy etc it is possible. With wisdom you can transform these distortions into love.

322. Which are the elements of stress?

Sri Sri: Lack of energy, the desire to achieve in too short a time, and by not being in a pleasant state of mind. These can be combated by increasing one's energy level, confidence and trust.

323. When we say that so and so person is a realized soul, what do they realize?

Sri Sri: Realization is just that I am not the body but I am much more than the body. I have been here before this birth and I will continue to be there after my death also. If someone realizes this, that's it. But that only they can say, others cannot judge for them.

324. How can I maintain happiness?

Sri Sri: Do not make such an effort. In order to save your happiness, you have to spread it. Share your happiness with everyone. Why worry in this short span of life when there is such beautiful knowledge.

325. What to do if someone is always jealous of me?

Sri Sri: Someone is jealous about you all the time? Lucky you are! You must be lucky - that's why people are jealous about you. Nobody is jealous about unlucky people. So when you are lucky, why are you unhappy? You have simply forgotten that you are lucky, that's why you are unhappy.

326. What is beauty and how to enhance it within and around us?

Sri Sri: First of all you should know you have a beautiful mind. The mind is free, it is loving, beautiful, satisfied and not feverish. So when the spirit is centered or your mind is centered, that beauty shines through.

327. Anyways in everyone's life there is suffering and there is joy, whether you are good or bad. So why be good?

Sri Sri: Being bad brings tremendous misery for a long time. Being good allows you to cross over any misery that can come your way with very little effort. So better be good!

328. Guruji, is worrying about the future something totally wrong?

Sri Sri: No, worry about the future of the whole planet and worry about the destiny of humanity. Worry about human values, worry about the increasing corruption, worry about all these big things. I also worry about the planet. But worry should not take away your smile, your enthusiasm and your energy to do things now.

329. I can't think of more questions. Please tell me some question to ask?

Sri Sri: That's good. My job is not to tell you or give you questions but to take away your questions.

330. One person from crowd asks, Gurudev can I give you flower?

Sri Sri: Why do you want to give flowers to me? I feel that you are saying Guruji you have not blossomed so you are giving me flowers. Is that what you mean to say? (Laughs) So don't bring flowers, sweets, for me. You blossom like a flower, that's what I want. You be happy.

The visible proof that you have done Art of Living is that you have a smile on your face even in difficult situations. Because even a fool will smile in normal circumstances. But if you are going through tough times, or if have incurred some loss in life but still if you have smile on your face then I will know that you have become one with me.

This is the power of knowledge. If you blossom once, you won't fade. If you go back eight steps out of ten, it's okay, you can't go back all the ten steps. How many people lives have changed, raise your hands?

I will meet everybody. Have little patience; I am thinking when to meet, today or tomorrow. I will meet everybody.

331. Someone from crowd: 'Why do small children die, at young age?'

Sri Sri: You are asking why small children die. You tell me do you have tree in your house? Which, tree mango? Have you noticed that small, unripe mangoes fall from tree, you didn't ask that! What you can do is give proper nutrition/fertiliser to the tree.

There are some souls, which think that they will live only for few years and then go away. It all happens because of Sankalpa Shakti, Will Power.

Suppose, you are travelling in a bus. The bus driver can stop at one place for a cup of tea.

You can sit and ask, but the driver will stop where he likes. Or maybe he has a friend who is a shopkeeper, then the driver will stop there. Have you come by bus or train? Train, then the driver has no choice, he has to stop at railway station only (Laughs).

332. If humans are made by god, then who made god?

Sri Sri: Who said who made whom? You don't worry about that. It is all there! There was a man once, in a hotel. He used to ask there is one hole in vada, who made it in the first place with hole in it. Who made idli first? If you give right answer, it will be free. If you give wrong answer, I will charge you double.

You have not seen god, so live fully in what you have.

This is called 'Anadhi'. 'Anadhi' is a word in Sanskrit which stands for something which does not have a beginning neither an end. If you want answer to this question, then you first give me answer to one question 'where is the start and end of a ball?'

333. Gurudev, what does 'dharma' means?

Sri Sri: It means which elevate your life. Which gives you love, happiness, in your life that is 'dharma'.

334. After lunch during meditation session, I go to sleep, what to do?

Sri Sri: Go off to sleep! The lunch was tasty is it? If you feel sleepy, go to sleep, no problem.

Devotee never gets saddened... Das kabhi udaas nahi hote...

335. Is it okay to be selfish to get my love is it right thing to do?

Sri Sri: By you becoming selfish if it hurt others, then you should think again. If you want specific answer but if you ask general question, then I will give you general answer only and not specific, I won't fall for this trick of yours!

I was travelling abroad: I was in France once, that time at the last minute, a lady came to me and pointed towards her finger 'is it required, necessary'? I looked at her finger, I saw one stone in a ring and I said 'no', I thought that some people wear some stone for some or the other reason. I said no, it's not needed.

Next day or day after I got a call from one devotee, aged 75 years, he said, Gurudev you

told my wife to take divorce from me! I said 'no', asks your wife again. Then he said that she met you at the airport and you said 'no need to wear that ring'. (Laughs)

So generally, what we do is we ask question for something going on in our mind. Then take the answer in our own suitable way. I will not fall for this trick.

336. Gurudev can we have yoga in school from beginning?

Sri Sri: Yoga is being considered as only a posture. No, it is not so. It is a bundle of knowledge. In a classroom, there are 50 students, and then all of them are not friends with each other. No, only four or five students sit together.

If we live life like this, then how will we live with friendliness in the world! If even in school we can't be friends with our classmates, then how we will do in our country and world? That is why it is important to learn how to be friendly.

Art of living is doing this. Yoga enables to do this. To be happy from within and friendly with others.

Grow the friendliness. If you are happy then you will be friends with others.

What is taught in our country here is how to fight for small-small things... no, this should change.

337. Gurudev, there are elections at our place, whom should we vote?

Sri Sri: You should all go and vote, but don't vote for bad people, gangsters, etc. Vote for the right candidate.

It is your duty to vote. When duty becomes celebration then it does not appear to be a burden, otherwise it will appear like a burden.

338. Gurudev, my name is Simran, I am from Dubai. This is the first time I have come here. I liked very much here the way people treat each other. I am sixteen years old; I was in depression for two years. I want your take my depression. How to deal with depression?

Sri Sri: That's it, it's all gone now. New life will start. Move on.

339. Why bad things happen to good people?

Sri Sri: It happens due to their foolishness. Due to lack of knowledge. If you put your hand in fire then it is bound to get hurt.

340. What is faith, I want to have faith but then question arises, doubt comes? Is it okay to be analytical?

Sri Sri: Yes, yes, you should have questions. You should do analysis, questions are must, it shows you have intellect.

Faith is to know that you are sitting here and the luggage in your room is safe. Lack of faith is that you sit here but worry whether my bag will be safe or not.

There are three types of faith: first is faith in yourself, second is faith in goodness of people in the world, and then faith in a law, in a power that is much beyond and much bigger than us.

Choose, middle path for everything. I won't say that you meditate for two hours! Choose middle path.

341. Is life simple or complicated?

Sri Sri: Life is complicated as well as simple. It depends on the way of looking. If you eat a banana, the digestion process of banana is very complicated. Some liquid is formed in mouth then it goes through intestine and then it goes to stomach for digestion. Life seems difficult because the good qualities inside you need to be brought out.

In foreign countries, slaughter houses are closing down. They have realised that non-veg is not good for health. Earlier in India coconut oil was consumed regularly, but a foreign company wanted to sell artificial butter in India, so a survey report was published stating that cholesterol is increased by consumption of coconut oil, etc. and slowly the consumption was reduced and their product entered the market.

Even butter, is very good for health, but foreign companies advertise it otherwise. Whatever you hold in your hand and it melts, is good for your health. Butter when comes in contact with your palm starts melting, so it is good for your health. It won't get stuck in your intestine. Everyone should consume butter.

Similarly, raw turmeric and raw ginger should be consumed along with lemon. It does the work of 19 medicines. Flax seed is consumed in Maharashtra, it is good for health.

The way our food habits, practices are designed, they are very good for health. We have Oorja tablet, which is of Sehjal leaves (drumstick). This tablet compensates for the deficiency in the body. You should take for a month at least and see the result for yourself. It is said that drumstick has four times the protein that of carrot. Shevga falli (drumstick) is good for our body, gives energy. Hence, we need to come back to Ayurveda and then health of society will improve.

342. How to control vulgar thoughts or lustful thoughts from coming?

Sri Sri: If you are studying for an exam or doing an important work, then whether such thoughts bother you? No! It bothers you when you don't eat properly, or when you see some photos, etc. If you are engaged in some work it does not bother you.

When you put your attention towards something then it gets converted into attraction. Anger takes birth from lust. Physical relation is not bad unless it is in your control. If your body is in control of physical attraction then it is wrong. Many people have been put behind bars because they raped someone. Just for the sake of few minutes of pleasure they have ruined their life.

Work with a big project in mind. Direct your energy in something positive. Be natural, you don't have to purposely ignore it and not to provoke it either.

If you read some vulgar books or if you see such movies then your mind gets diverted to such wrong things, like rape. Then that person wants to rape someone, even pets!

You should take middle path. This is skill. Brahma-charya can be attained with skill. It will give you energy, clear mind.

Purity, Mind becomes pure, increases your concentration, victory over your senses.

Sadhana, meditation it all helps in gaining control over your mind and body.

Sometimes when you feel little uncomfortable, little uneasy, then you do an experiment: avoid physical contact with others and see, within a day or two you will feel better.

343. We are following western culture now a days and it is very bad for us. Please guide.

Sri Sri: You should not blame western culture. There are good things also. We should focus on good points of western culture and follow it. There is so much cleanliness in those countries, we should learn from them. If people are sitting then nobody jumps and go ahead. They stand in queue properly. We don't have that in India. There are many things to be learnt from western culture.

If a tall person wants to sit then he will see whether he is obstructing the view of person sitting behind or not. If not, then only he will sit there. But here in India, people don't bother about the person sitting behind; they will come and sit in the front!

In foreign countries, people are very punctual. If the scheduled time is 7 o'clock then it is 7 o'clock. Here in India, 7 o'clock mean 7:30!

I remember, I was in Germany and I reached one event 7 minutes before the event time. I saw that the entire hall was empty. I asked one person have we come to right venue? He said 'Gurudev, there are seven minute to the event, don't worry, everyone will be here' and to my surprise, within seven minutes the hall was full & packed!

What we are doing is we are accepting the things that they are discarding. For example, they are stopping smoking, we have smoking here. They are giving family values; we should respect it in our country.

344. What is 'vyakti-puja'?

Sri Sri: If you put a photo of a cricketer or a film actor then nobody will object. But if you put a photo of spiritual leader then the family is concerned. They think that this person should not leave material life and leave family. It was not so fifty years ago.

345. I am interested in spirituality as well as agriculture. Can I become a Rishi and work in Krish? Can I take your volunteers team and become Sachin Tendulkar?

Sri Sri: Yes, of course. You can become whatever you want!

346. How many languages do you speak?

Sri Sri: Languages? Only one: 'Language of the heart!'

347. Guruji, I get bad dreams at night, and this happens very frequently. I am afraid. Please help.

Sri Sri: There is no need to fear. Just chant Om Namah Shivaya before sleeping at night, or Jai Gurudev, or you can say both and then sleep.

See in our country, and in other countries around the world, before sleeping, children were made to say prayers, is it not? Does anyone follow this now-a-days? How many of you here do it? (A few people raise their hands) See, very few sitting here follow this. Before sleeping

all of you should pray and make the children pray too. Chant one shloka (prayer verse), or take the name of some deity you revere, or just offer thanks to God for the day given to you.

There is no need to pray in Sanskrit only. Even saying a prayer in Hindi will do. God does not only know Sanskrit. He understands your regional languages as well. So just pray. What is important is the feeling. So before you sleep join your hands and pray, 'Thank you God for the gift of today. Bless me that I may sleep well tonight and may my day tomorrow be good'.

So you may recite a few lines like this or you may just remember God, and chant any name of the Lord that you know. You can chant the name of your deity or your Guru, or any saint. Pray and surrender everything to them and go to sleep. In the ancient days, children would pray to their mother and father and then go to sleep. But now day's children don't have such devotion towards their parents. If parents keep fighting with each other the whole day then how will the children feel like praying to them? They think, 'The parents keep fighting with each other, how we can treat them as God?'

If you do not believe in God, or any other deity, then also it is fine. There is no compulsion to believe in God. In that case sit silently with yourself for a few moments and just quiet the mind. Simply remind yourself, 'My soul is eternal and I am pure'. In the Ashtavakra Gita, it is said, 'Aho Aham Namah Mahiyam', this means, 'I bow down to myself'. We can say this (bowing down to oneself) only when there is no sense of guilt within us. Thinking this way, just relax within yourself. You should do this much at least. So meditate for some time and then sleep. Then you will not have bad dreams and you will have good quality sleep.

348. What to do to stop being demanding? It comes and goes. Where does such a tendency arise from?

Sri Sri: Just wonder about it. When you get attention it gives you some energy and you feel elevated. When you are so centered within, then it doesn't matter whether people's attention is there or not, you don't care about it.

But normally people's attention somehow makes you feel little better. That's why people do so many things just to draw attention from others.

Don't worry about where this tendency arises from. If it is arising and you have watched it, then just let go and move on.

349. Greed takes away the contentment. It is the, 'I want more, I want more', which makes you miserable, which makes you put so much effort! You should think that whatever is needed for me, I will get it. You should have that faith that it will come to you.

350. When I feel thankful about something, I feel the next moment it gets undone.

Sri Sri: You are thirsty, somebody gives you water, you thank them. What happens after that? Thirst comes back? Water doesn't stay in you? No, no, no. Nothing like that, don't keep such things in your head. The more thankful we are the more things will happen.

351. How to come out of attachments? The people whom you believe in they deceive you, how to come out of that?

Sri Sri: If someone deceives you, they are going to face the consequences. Why? Because that is the law of Karma and you got deceived because you are not being careful. As simple as that. You should have been careful. When somebody deceived you, you learnt a lesson and you move on.

352. How to motivate oneself?

Sri Sri: Why do you have to motivate yourself? Just be relaxed. Be happy. When you are happy you are already motivated.

353. When you are there then in our lives then why do we have to suffer? Why don't you wave you magic wand and take away all problems?

Sri Sri: Biggest magic is that you have come here to ask your question! You also have to have something to do. In a movie, hero also has a role, villain also and in the middle also characters have roles. Life is a game, everyone has a role. In cricket there are 11 people in the field. If bowler is only catching the ball then what is the need for the rest? Everyone has their own role.

354. Why is the form of Goddess Kali so frightening? Why do we pray to something that evokes fear in you?

Sri Sri: If you can look at anything, which looks so extreme, with love then your fear vanishes. There is a lot of symbolism in Kali's depiction. The cut hands on Her symbolizes going beyond karma, the biting tongue depicts silence and the decapitated head that she carries symbolizes going beyond thoughts and emotions.

355. Why do we do upavas (fast)?

Sri Sri: Upavas means sitting close to the Guru, the Divine and what is required when you sit there? Your mind should stay there. If you have a stomach full of food you will only feel sleepy when you sit there. Your hunger gets satiated with knowledge. When you are content, you don't feel hunger. Upavas does not mean not eating food. It means being in knowledge. Your fasting to please God is foolishness. In all religions there is the belief of fasting to please Gods. But one advantage of being without food is that you get rid of toxins in the body.



JAI GURUDEV